

80/66 c

v. 1

*The Bancroft Library*

University of California • Berkeley















Wanda Sankary

FROM SOD HOUSE TO STATE HOUSE

Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library







Wanda Sankary  
2nd Campaign, 1956

Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Women in Politics Oral History Project

Wanda Sankary

FROM SOD HOUSE TO STATE HOUSE

With Introductions by  
Michael Hallahan  
Sheridan Hegland  
Morris Sankary  
Walter S.J. Swanson

An Interview Conducted by  
Malca Chall  
in 1977

Underwritten by a research grant from  
the Research Collection Program of the  
National Endowment for the Humanities.

Copy no. 1

Copyright © 1979 by the Regents of the University of California

## TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Wanda Sankary

PREFACE	i
INTRODUCTIONS by	
Michael Hallahan	v
Sheridan Hegland	ix
Morris Sankary	x
Walter S.J. Swanson	xii
INTERVIEW HISTORY	xiv
BRIEF BIOGRAPHY	xvi
I FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION	1
[Interview 1, January 12, 1977; Tape 1, side A]	1
First Years on the Homestead Farm in North Dakota	1
The Moves to Scranton, N.D. and then to San Diego, California	11
[Tape 1, side B]	13
San Diego: Jobs, Schools, and Illness, 1930-1942	15
Time Out to Recuperate from Tuberculosis	20
World War II Widow: Trauma and Recovery	23
Law School, 1945-1950	25
[Tape 2, side A]	26
Establishing a Legal Practice	29
II THE NEW CHALLENGES: POLITICS AND MOTHERHOOD	32
Winning Candidate for California Assembly, 1954	32
[Tape 2, side B]	40
Weekends at Home with the Babies	41
Losing Candidate for California Assembly, 1956	43
Dedicated Mother	45
III EXPERIENCES AS A LEGISLATOR, 1954-1956	53
[Interview 2, December 12, 1977; Tape 3, side A]	53
First Days: The Heated Campaign for Assembly Speaker	53
Making Decisions: Favors and Pressures	57
Socializing	62
Lobbying and Lobbyists	64
[Tape 3, side B]	64
The Committees and the Committee Process	69
[Tape 4, side A]	74
A Legislator's Typical Day	77
Consideration of Issues and Bills	78
[Tape 4, side B]	82

Evaluating Politics	83
Women in Politics	83
The First Campaign Reviewed: Illness, Pregnancy, and Law Practice	85
The Conflict Between Home and Career	87
Politics and Democracy	89
The Devastating Reelection Campaign, 1956	89
IV ADDITIONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF THE EXPERIENCES IN THE LEGISLATURE:	
ISSUES AND BILLS	94
[Tape 5, side A]	94
Insurance	94
Welfare	95
The Judiciary	95
The Seawater Conversion Plant	97
Other Issues and Bills	98
[Tape 5, side B]	99
Legislation Related to Women	100
Concern for the "Little People"	102
The Women in the Legislature	102
A Brief Summary of the Legislative Experience	104
AFTERWORD	105
INDEX	107



## PREFACE

The following interview is one of a series of tape-recorded memoirs in the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project. The series has been designed to study the political activities of a representative group of California women who became active in politics during the years between the passage of the woman's suffrage amendment and the current feminist movement--roughly the years between 1920 and 1965. They represent a variety of views: conservative, moderate, liberal, and radical, although most of them worked within the Democratic and Republican parties. They include elected and appointed officials at national, state, and local governmental levels. For many the route to leadership was through the political party--primarily those divisions of the party reserved for women.

Regardless of the ultimate political level attained, these women have all worked in election campaigns on behalf of issues and candidates. They have raised funds, addressed envelopes, rung doorbells, watched polls, staffed offices, given speeches, planned media coverage, and when permitted, helped set policy. While they enjoyed many successes, a few also experienced defeat as candidates for public office.

Their different family and cultural backgrounds, their social attitudes, and their personalities indicate clearly that there is no typical woman political leader; their candid, first-hand observations and their insights about their experiences provide fresh source material for the social and political history of women in the past half century.

In a broader framework their memoirs provide valuable insights into the political process as a whole. The memoirists have thoughtfully discussed details of party organization and the work of the men and women who served the party. They have analysed the process of selecting party leaders and candidates, running campaigns, raising funds, and drafting party platforms, as well as the more subtle aspects of political life such as maintaining harmony and coping with fatigue, frustration, and defeat. Perceived through it all are the pleasures of friendships, struggles, and triumphs in a common cause.

The California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project has been financed by both an outright and a matching grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Matching funds were provided by the Rockefeller Foundation for the Helen Gahagan Douglas unit of the project, by the Columbia Foundation, and by individuals who were interested in supporting memoirs of their friends and colleagues. In addition, funds from the California State Legislature-sponsored Knight-Brown Era Public Affairs Project made it possible to increase the research and broaden the scope of the interviews in which there was a meshing of the woman's political career with the topics being studied in the Knight-Brown project. Professors Judith Blake Davis, Albert Lepawsky, and Walton Bean served as principal investigators during the period July 1975-December 1977 that the project was

underway. This series is the second phase of the Women in Politics Oral History Project, the first of which dealt with the experiences of eleven women who had been leaders and rank-and-file workers in the suffrage movement.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons significant in the history of the West and the nation. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library. Interviews were conducted by Amelia R. Fry, Miriam Stein, Gabrielle Morris, Malca Chall, Fern Ingersoll, and Ingrid Scobie.

Malca Chall, Project Director  
Women in Politics Oral History Project

Willa Baum, Department Head  
Regional Oral History Office

17 April 1979  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California at Berkeley

## CALIFORNIA WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

- March Fong Eu, *High Achieving Nonconformist in Local and State Government*. 1977
- Jean Wood Fuller, *Organizing Women: Careers in Volunteer Politics and Government Administration*. 1977
- Elizabeth R. Gatov, *Grassroots Party Organizer to United States Treasurer*. 1977
- Bernice Hubbard May, *A Native Daughter's Leadership in Public Affairs*. 1976
- Hulda Hoover McLean, *A Conservative Crusader for Good Government*. 1977
- Julia Porter, *Dedicated Democrat and City Planner*. 1977
- Wanda Sankary, *From Sod House to State House*. 1979
- Vera Schultz, *Marin County Perspective on Ideals and Realities in State and Local Government*. 1977
- Clara Shirpser, *One Woman's Role in Democratic Party Politics*. 1975
- Elizabeth Snyder, *California's First Woman State Party Chairman*. 1977
- Eleanor Wagner, *Independent Political Coalitions: Electoral, Legislative, and Community*. 1977
- Carolyn Wolfe, *Educating for Citizenship: A Career in Community Affairs and the Democratic Party, 1906-1976*. 1978

## Interviews in Process

Frances Albrier	Lucile Hosmer
Marjorie Benedict	La Rue McCormick
Odessa Cox	Emily Pike
Pauline Davis	Zita Remley
Ann Eliaser	Hope Mendoza Schechter
Kimiko Fujii	Carmen Warschaw
Elinor R. Heller	Rosalind Wyman
Patricia R. Hitt	Mildred Younger

Helen Gahagan Douglas Unit\*

Interviews in Process

Helen Gahagan Douglas	Kenneth Harding
Juanita Barbee	Charles Hogan
Rachel Bell	Chet Holifield
Fay Bennett	Mary Keyserling
Albert Cahn	Judge Byron Lindsley
Margery Cahn	Helen Lustig
Evelyn Chavoor	Alvin Meyers
Alis De Sola	William Malone
Tilford Dudley	Philip Noel-Baker
India Edwards	Cornelia Palms
Walter Gahagan	Walter Pick
Arthur Goldschmidt	Frank Rogers
Elizabeth Goldschmidt	Lucy Kramer Cohen
Leo Goodman	

The researcher is directed also to interviews in the Earl Warren Era Oral History Project and the Knight-Brown Era Public Affairs Project for additional material on California political history.

\*The Helen Gahagan Douglas unit was designed to complete one long biographical memoir with Mrs. Douglas and short interviews with persons who had worked with her in the theatre, in her campaigns, and in Congress.

May 1978

## INTRODUCTION by Michael Hallahan

There have been two periods in both our lives when Wanda Sankary and I have been very close friends: the first was during our college years and the second, many years later. My earliest recollection of Wanda was of a pretty, dark-haired, rather shy and serious high school girl who grew up as I did in a quiet, middle class community of East San Diego. I did not know her well till later when we were both in college, but well enough to know she was an honor student, a good daughter and a member of the same church as I was.

After high school we both initially went to our small home-town college, now San Diego State University, where we became friends and occasionally dated. Then World War II intervened in our lives and curiously resulted in a deeper but totally platonic friendship between us, the beginning of which I remember very vividly. I had returned to San Diego on leave, a young army captain eager to see old friends, but my visit, I knew, coincided with Wanda's tragic early widowhood. She had written me that she had married a navy pilot, a boy she had known since childhood, and later, that he had been killed in action. We went out together several times, but talk was always serious as she felt a strong loyalty to her husband which I would not transgress.

For some months afterwards we exchanged a few letters, mostly about our ideas and plans and, in her case, also about her studies and new goals--always interlaced with almost poetic descriptions of people, places and natural scenes that had affected her. Her letters then and ever since have been exciting to read and evocative of her personality--and, I might add, I still have a few of them.

The next time I saw Wanda, near the end of the war, I was again on my way home on leave, and passing through Los Angeles I stopped to visit her, now living alone in a small apartment while going to Law School at the University of Southern California. She was living an almost ascetic life, studying for exams, with books and papers everywhere, and pouring all her energies into attempting to graduate as soon as possible. Today whenever I think of Wanda during those early years I remember that visit, for she set aside her

studies and we talked openly and earnestly for hours about all the things most important to us; and then as later I was struck by the wonderful blend of self-discipline and joyousness in her character.

For an interval of many years we had little contact, though I followed her career with interest through mutual friends and the media. When some six years ago we met again by chance, both browsing in a downtown bookstore, I knew her instantly--she was so little changed in appearance or demeanor--and since then, although we have both married and followed our respective careers, it was as though nothing had changed. Luckily for me, my wife Peg feels as I do that Wanda is someone special, one of those few friends who add extra dimension to our lives.

I feel, therefore, rather uniquely qualified to attempt to draw a portrait of Wanda as I know her and to explain why she has accomplished what she has and why she is such an exciting personality to her many friends. In the first place she is a presence in any gathering. She is of course attractive, most of all for the warm, direct gaze of her large, brown eyes and her wide flashing smile, but her real attraction to others lies in her personal magnetism. Her boundless and infectious zest for life is instantly felt, and there is an aura of excitement about her even when she's engaged in the simplest most routine activities. Her conversation is always enlivened by her constant exploration of new experiences and ideas. She has never stopped learning and growing and, for example, has just in the past few years taken classes in piano, physiology of the brain, auto mechanics, speed reading, ballroom dancing, transcendental meditation and doubtless a few others I'm unaware of. One could call her a dilettante in the best sense of the word, for she is a genuine enthusiast of art, of opera, of theatre, of sports, of politics, of psychology, of ESP research or in fact of anything she deems worthwhile. She thinks nothing of driving hundreds of miles to see a play or exhibit, but at the same time she considers time precious--too precious to waste on anything mediocre or purely frivolous--and so she is very selective about what she spends her time on. Her friends are the beneficiaries of her discrimination, since she is an encyclopedia of information on the best of everything from restaurants and shows to galleries and politicians.

In looking back, it seems to me that this selectivity has been one of the important secrets of her personal life. She has always had a pragmatic, analytical intellect which has enabled her to make choices--choices of experiences, of friends, of courses of action--which have preserved the integrity of her life. She was an unconscious "woman's libber" long before the term was heard of, in the sense that she was always more influenced by her own drive for self-fulfillment than by others' expectations of her. Yet she was, and is, a curious mixture of personal self-assertion and a strong conventional sense of propriety. Her manner--a cautious diffidence overlaying a strong pervasive self-confidence--is genuine.

After experimenting with other careers, she entered law, heedless of its difficulties or its barriers against women because it best suited her talents--her logical mind, her verbal fluency and capacity for hard work--and because she believed it offered her opportunities to carry out her ideas of social justice.

For all her self-reliance, she is a romantic, an optimist and a perennial champion of the unfortunate. She was, and is, a liberal in the original sense of the word, and though she scorns passivity in willing victims, she is indignant at abuses of power or miscarriages of justice and an implacable enemy of those who knowingly do injury to others. I know that what she cherished most in the many years of her joint law practice with her husband were their triumphs over political chicanery and power plays by special interests. I remember one time when she and I and my wife were driving home from a quick trip to San Francisco, she talked for hours with obvious pride and pleasure about some of these cases, and I was deeply touched by her great admiration for her husband and by her uncompromising sense of justice.

In the later years of the Sankary & Sankary law firm, it often fell to Wanda to handle some of the small philanthropic cases, several of which I have some personal knowledge of. One involved my son who had phoned us from jail in Orange County where he was being held on charges of car theft (it was a case of mistaken identity, and he was driving his own car, it was later established). After doing what she could by phone, Wanda cancelled her day's calendar, rose very early the next morning, drove ninety miles to the jail, and slept on a wooden bench in the courtroom antechamber so she would be able to act as early as possible in my son's behalf. This is the kind of thing one doesn't forget.

Of Wanda's political career I know only what she's told me, but I know, too, that although since leaving the legislature she has never sought another office, she has nevertheless remained an activist at heart; she has kept herself well-informed and has often exerted pressure from behind the scenes at both local and state levels to right a wrong or influence legislation she believes important. She doesn't hesitate to raise her voice or underwrite causes or candidates she feels strongly about, from supporting a position of the Coastal Commission to relocation of a school crossing. And she exhorts others to act on what they believe, to write letters or to carry placards whether or not she agrees with them.

As has previously been suggested, of all Wanda's enthusiasms, her interest in people is the most pervasive in her life. Her friends are as various as her activities and include young and old, the famous and the humble, and they cut across all social and economic levels, but one thing they all have in common: they are accomplished. Wanda is utterly without social pretensions or snobbishness, but she is impatient with ignorance or mediocrity at any level; she deeply admires and is attracted to anyone who is creative, vital, talented, actively engaged with life. While she never loses her supportive compassion for the unfortunates of life, she chooses friends for mutual enrichment, and she gives as much as she takes. She is one of those rare people who always remembers names and never forgets a birthday, an anniversary or special day of those whose friendship she values. I have so often had an unexpected lift in spirits when I have found her card with a small thoughtful gift and the inevitable bouquet from her own garden waiting for me in the entry of my home on some day of special importance to me.

Despite her sentimentality, she is not provincial, nor is she easily deceived. She has a penetrating, intuitive understanding of people and an uncanny perception of motivations, coalitions and obscure maneuvering in social and political affairs. And although she is a woman of strong convictions, she respects integrity, conscientiousness, and honest points of view. That is why she is able to understand and defend certain public figures who stand accused of illegalities in the pursuit of ends they believe are right and fair.

It is not surprising, in the final analysis, that Wanda has changed so little over the years. Doubtless she is more sophisticated and more confident, and her intellect more finely honed, than when she was a girl. Yet she is still open to new ideas, still idealistic, still a believer in human nature, still romantic and even a touch naive. The qualities she possessed as a girl, which predetermined that her life would be something out of the ordinary, are the same qualities which have crystallized in her maturity--a tremendous energy and self-discipline and an implacable drive to learn, to do, to experience all that life offers. She has lost none of her youthful values over the years and I feel quite certain she never will.

Michael Hallahan

26 April, 1978  
San Diego, California



INTRODUCTION by Sheridan Hegland

Wanda Sankary brought a fresh feminine viewpoint to the California State Assembly during her tenure 1955-57, and the Legislature is better for it.

Personally I am most grateful to her because she worked enthusiastically for two of my bills. One, the State Scholarship Act substantially copied by the legislatures of thirty-three other states, attested to her interest in helping gifted youth, otherwise unable financially, to attend the California college or university of their choice. By now (September, 1978) more than 100,000 have had that choice.

The second measure was closer to home, bringing to San Diego a branch of the University of California. The towering institution at La Jolla stands as the realization of that dream.

Her help may well have been critical in the passage of these measures.

Other legislators no doubt are in their own debt to Wanda, who proved effective and diligent in her committee assignments. Her warmth and charm helped pave the way for good legislation.

The high regard her fellow legislators place in her is indicated by her election as a member of the Board of the Association of Retired Legislators.

Sheridan Hegland  
Member, California Assembly  
1955-1961

15 September, 1978  
San Diego, California

## INTRODUCTION by Morris Sankary

It's been almost thirty years ago that I first laid eyes on Wanda. I remember sitting down in the income tax class and Wanda came in and sat down beside me. I didn't know it then, but we were destined to meet, to go through law school together, to get married, and to practice together.

Wanda is a very dynamic person; what she wanted to accomplish, she usually did. Once she set her mind to something, there was nothing that could stop her.

And if Wanda felt that she was right, there was no one who could argue her out of her position. It was this characteristic that made Wanda a fighter and champion for the rights of the underdog, the underprivileged and the oppressed. Not only in the practice of law, but when she was in the Legislature, fighting for the rights of people and the causes that she believed in.

I remember how hard we worked studying to get through law school and how hard we worked studying to pass the Bar. Although these were difficult years in terms of work and stress, they were also enjoyable years, because never again would we be free from the pressures that automatically flow from the practice of law.

After we graduated, Wanda was the first person in our class to have a case of her own. I remember it was a case involving a "speed contest" and she asked me to help her find the law on the matter to argue the case to the court.

I went to the law library and got a copy of what I thought was the latest code section applicable, I handed it to Wanda and we went over it together. At that time the code section made a "speed contest" a misdemeanor.

Little did I know that I had handed Wanda a code that somebody had very carefully marked over; it changed the "1947" to make it appear "1949", leading one to believe it was the latest code on the subject matter.

Unfortunately the law had been changed in 1949 making a "speed contest" a felony. When she walked into the courtroom, she did not know that her 18-year-old client, the only son of the law librarian who entrusted him to her, could have been sent to jail on a felony plus a huge fine.

As any lawyer will understand what the feelings are on his first day of court appearance after years of preparation for this big day and what apprehension really is, he will appreciate what ensued.

The case was called. Wanda stood up and, apparently with confidence, answered "Wanda Young, ready for the defendant."

Shortly thereafter, the fireworks began. Wanda, believing that she had the correct law before her, told the judge that he was wrong on the law and even argued with him about the law, when the judge asked to see the Code that Wanda was reading from to compare it with his own copy. At this point the error was discovered.

During the many cases we tried together as co-counsel, I remember pulling on Wanda's skirt to stop her arguing with the judge, but to no avail. She never would give up. Fortunately, most judges were understanding gentlemen and neither she nor her clients were ever penalized for it. In fact, sometimes new law was made. We had fun.

During the entire time that Wanda and I practiced together, Wanda would really fight for her client, always being careful that she was honest and correct on the law and facts.

Little did we know when she accepted the invitation to run for public office that she was pregnant. Having accepted the challenge, nothing would stop her from giving her all to the task of winning. It was nip and tuck at the election but when the final results were tallied she had not only won the election, but had given birth to our son Timothy.

In the next election the monied interests pulled out all stops to defeat her but many citizens regretted her loss to the legislature and to the state.

Our married life together was interesting and active; professionally it was stressful but we enjoyed it. Life was never dull for a moment. And the years sped by. Wanda was a devoted mother, wife, and law partner, always willing to be helpful, hard working and loyal.

It was a bad business investment that wiped out our life savings--a half million dollars, forcing us to start over, at middle age, that finally did us in. We each nearly broke physically under the strain of running a modular construction company that couldn't survive in the 1970 crash in the housing industry. We didn't break; our union did.

But, despite everything, Wanda will leave her mark on California, and, I feel, on everyone who knows and loves her.

Morris Sankary

October 1978  
San Diego, California

## INTRODUCTION by Walter S.J. Swanson

With anyone, it is difficult to separate the person you first met, or heard of, from the person you later came to know, and it is especially true--for me--of Wanda Sankary. I was in my first year in San Diego, a transplanted Washington, D.C., newspaperman, that 1954 autumn when Wanda Sankary, week in, week out, was going door-to-door, pregnant not just with baby but with spunk, to get herself elected as a Democrat-in-name-only to a seat that was being vacated by a woman Republican-in-fact.

I was aware, as a newcomer, that her husband's name-familiarity as a U.S. attorney was helpful to her in front-door explanations of who she was. She probably told housewives--there still were housewives then--how she and her husband had gone to law school together and passed the same state bar exam, and that even if he was first in his class she was right up there in top rank too. I don't think there were paper diapers then but had there been, she and the lady answering the door might have discussed the merits of Pampers just like on television (except TV itself was then still a baby and hadn't grown up to such estate.)

I've forgotten where Wanda and I finally met, except when we did I was her natural enemy. That was because I by then held an executive position with the Copley Newspapers in San Diego and she felt herself badly treated by them. After turning down someone's suggestion that she switch to GOP registration for reelection, she got what she felt was dastardly press treatment by the Republican San Diego Union and the Evening Tribune.

I do not know the rights and wrongs of that but I do know that the Republican Party, always formidable in San Diego, wanted badly to recapture what was previously a "safe" seat. Had a woman Democrat ever won reelection to it, she would have become extremely difficult ever to oust again. I knew this political wisdom from my Michigan boyhood when my father, a novice in politics, but hunting a Depression meal-ticket for his family, tried despite all advice to run against a veteran woman city clerk in Lansing. He was snowed under, as Wanda probably would have snowed any opponent under had she won her first campaign for reelection.

What Wanda and I both remember, about meeting, was that at someone's Christmas party at least a decade later we became embroiled in an argument so sincere and loud the hostess grew very nervous. Wanda, back to being a good attorney by then with lots of women clients, had very strong convictions about the generally shabby treatment women got within our system of rights or privileges. California's new "no fault" divorce law was still in the news; she feared it was going to further ruin some women's chances of a fairer deal in life. I, on the other hand, in this instant-debate, defended the concept that men must not be ruined financially, and forced to flee the state, or forever go penniless, by a law that so far was saying "Tilt!" whenever a woman wanted to take revenge for what was often a mutual mistake. But I could see, even through the smoke of battle, that Wanda was never going to strike her colors, and so after a while we settled down to quieter voices and I then discovered the generous, attractive woman of great principle that the voters had somehow not gotten to know well enough, else she would have been like the Lansing city clerk--unbeatable, for the voters (once they know) will almost always vote for honesty and guts.

My wife and I have been to Sankary holiday open-houses since, out by San Diego State in what is still called the College area even though the college has become a giant university. The first time Morris was still out in the kitchen of the handsome old English Tudor house cheerfully whistling and keeping the dishes moving--he liked such duties. Later we've been to one when Wanda had begun to live there on her own. (The Sankarys--he has remarried--still have law offices together, and are friendly.) What struck both my wife and me was how many different "kinds" of friends Wanda has--even without Morris there. They ran from the very young to the very old; they came from all sorts of homes and jobs. The big, friendly house was jammed with them--but I don't think there was one person among them who wouldn't have been worth luring off into a corner to find out more about that person's feelings or life.

I am a writer--not a newspaper kind anymore but one with a novelist's kind of curiosity--and I think Wanda's would be a life that would tell a lot about women in our century. She is a lawmaker who scorned the nuts-and-bolts politics, perhaps to her regret, but was firm for principle and shocked at all the legislative rape of it. She is a mother to whom her sons--one adopted at the same time the other was born--seem to have a fantastic allegiance, not based at all on duty or custom but perhaps on admiration of a great, good gallantry. My thought is that we must not look back on Wanda as a "pioneer" among California women political leaders, but instead look to her as a valuable symbol of how a free-feeling woman can refuse to trade upon her sex and make her record in life anyhow--and still wind up top ranked again.

Walter S.J. Swanson

3 April, 1978  
La Jolla, California

[Mr. Swanson is author of the novel The Happening, (A.S. Barnes) and of a prize-winning play.]

## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Wanda Sankary, a long-time resident of San Diego, California, won election to the California assembly in 1954 and served one two-year term. During the decade of the 1950s a number of women sought places in the legislature but only four achieved that goal: Pauline Davis (1952-1976), Dorothy Donahoe (1952-1960), Kathryn Niehouse (1942-1954) and Wanda Sankary (1954-1956). For this reason Wanda Sankary was invited to participate in the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project.

At the time that we held our first interview session I knew that she had served in the state legislature, that she was an attorney, and that her older son had been born on the day after she won her election. The source for this latter bit of information came from an article "Women in Politics" by Marion Sanders in Harpers, August, 1955. Long before the consciousness-raising days of the current women's movement, the author wrote,

"Lesser battle axes take a cautious view on the question of women in public office....Wanda Sankary of San Diego produced a baby the day after she was elected to the state legislature. This was dramatic, but really quite inconvenient. So is the whole business of running for office if you happen to be a woman. We can take it or leave it alone."

Wanda Sankary and I met on January 12, 1977 in a condominium in Redondo Beach overlooking the ocean where she was staying for a brief time. She had obviously been thinking about what we were going to discuss in this first interview because she had received the outline of questions ahead of time. With warmth, good humor, and barely discernible patches of wistfulness, Wanda filled in considerable background about her family, her education, her experiences in law school, her career as an attorney, and her campaigns for the state assembly. It was a remarkable story, evoking an inner vitality, intelligence, and a personality far more complex than those sentences in Harpers could lead one to imagine.

After two hours of recording, we strolled along the beachfront walk to a restaurant for lunch, talking about a variety of current topics. Wanda had many interests and concerns, but it was apparent that she, unlike most of the women being interviewed in this California Women Political Leaders project, and despite her term in the assembly, had never been deeply immersed in politics--she was not "a political animal." Wanda Sankary's memoir is thus unique among the twenty-eight in this series.

At parting, we agreed that we would complete the taping at some future date in San Diego at which time we would concentrate on her term in the assembly and her subsequent legal career. Before we met again on December 12,

1977, I had read the files on Wanda Sankary in the library of the San Diego Union and Evening Tribune and noted the variety of legislative issues she had been concerned with, not the least of which dealt with equal rights for women.

I sent ahead an outline of questions; Wanda found a box full of clippings, pictures, and slip bills saved from the period 1954-1956. But she admitted that she was not prepared for our interview. She was coming down with what turned out to be a very bad siege of flu, and various pressing personal matters had been occupying her mind. Despite all this we decided to turn on the tape recorder and get what information we could. In this way we worked for nearly two hours in the study of Wanda's large, comfortable, English-style home. Before we finished and went out to lunch Wanda agreed to record, on her own, her recollections about specific legislation in which she had had an interest. She did so in January, 1978.

As her poignant Afterword so well explains, these past several years have been exceedingly difficult. Thus her review of the edited transcript and the handling of several other chores required to complete the manuscript were often delayed. Having learned during our brief contacts, however, that Wanda was not a quitter, I understood that eventually she would complete the assignment. She added information during her review which she had forgotten during the interview; she mailed, frequently, more clippings, pictures, and slip bills, many of which have been copied and placed in the manuscript where they are relevant and useful as an aid to research; and she sought out persons to write the informative introductions.

The look back into the past has been completed. According to her Afterword Wanda is now ready to move her life in a new direction, an encouraging up-beat tone on which to end this memoir.

Malca Chall  
Interviewer-editor

9 April, 1979  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California  
Berkeley, California

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY -- Wanda Sankary

- 1919            Born on a farm, south of Scranton, North Dakota
- 1926-1930    Moved to Scranton; attended elementary school.
- 1930-1937    Moved to San Diego; attended Woodrow Wilson Junior High School and  
              Herbert Hoover High School
- 1937-1939    San Diego State College.
- 1939-1941    Hospitalized with tuberculosis, San Diego.
- 1942-1943    University of California, Berkeley.
- 1942-1943    Married Allen Young; widowed seven months later.
- 1943-1945    Private investigator, San Diego firm.
- 1945-1950    Law School, University of California; LLB.
- 1952           Married Morris Sankary.
- 1950-1975    Attorney at Law; Sankary and Sankary.
- 1954-1956    Assembly, California State Legislature.
- 1957-1978    Homemaker, part-time attorney, world-wide traveler.



## I FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION

[Interview 1: January 12, 1975]  
[begin tape 1, side A]

### First Years on the Homestead Farm in North Dakota

Chall: Let's start with your date of birth and place of birth.

Sankary: Well, I was born on a little farm south of Scranton, North Dakota. My parents had settled there in the early part of the century at a time when there wasn't a village or a neighbor or a human being within sixty miles--no roads, nothing but buffaloes and Indians.

Chall: Is that right? What were they doing, homesteading?

Sankary: Yes, and they built this sod house and I was born in it. I was the last of six children. There were no doctors or midwives. Even my father wasn't there because he went away and worked in the coal mine. My mother was there alone on the prairie.

Chall: What year?

Sankary: That was 1919 on December 22.

Chall: And all the snow and cold air.

Sankary: Yes, oh it was very cold.

Chall: Did your mother ever tell you who attended her?

Sankary: She was always alone with each birth. I recall her saying that once she saw someone walking across the prairie and she got so excited she went out and yelled and screamed and waved. He didn't see her. To see a human being was just so exciting to her. She was utterly alone.

Chall: If you lived on this large plot of land, was anybody farming it?

Sankary: Yes, she and my dad farmed it, but there weren't any other settlers. There was nothing for sixty miles: Dickinson was the little village. And then by the time I was born there were other farmers and there was this little town of Scranton ten miles away which had about 200 people.

Chall: If you were born in 1919, they moved in what--ten, twelve years before that?

Sankary: Yes, I guess so. It was just after 1901 when they came from Poland, and lived first in Pennsylvania a short time.

Chall: Both of them together?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: As a married couple?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: Let me get their backgrounds then. Starting with your mother--where in Poland was she born?

Sankary: She came from Poznan. It was a city life, so she knew nothing about gardening, and farming, and so forth. Neither did my dad. I guess when they got married, they decided--she urged him. I know he was reluctant to come, but she had the courage to come to America and see if they could make a living, because there was just a lot of poverty and starvation in Poland.

Chall: Was your father from Poznan, too?

Sankary: I think he was.

Chall: What was your mother's name--do you know her maiden name?

Sankary: It was a long name that in Polish is pronounced Buszkiewich.

Chall: And her given name?

Sankary: Katherine. She named me after a Polish queen, Wanda. [Laughter]

Chall: Have you any idea of her birth date? How old was she?

Sankary: Yes, 1884.

Chall: What kind of family did she come from? Were they small-town merchants or what in Poznan?

Sankary: I don't know what her dad did. She had a brother that went out and worked for someone else on a sort of a farm and he hired a lot of women. She was very young, maybe nine or ten, I think, when she went out and worked for him in the fields. And did that all through her teens until she was married. I think, let's see, my father was several years older than she, about seven years older. He was twenty-six and she was nineteen when they were married. She talked him into coming to the United States.

Chall: Did she come from a large family of brothers and sisters?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: What did she do in the fields?

Sankary: Some kind of stooped labor, weeding, doing something in the fields.

Chall: Then she didn't have much of an education?

Sankary: No and at that time Poland was ruled by the Germans. It had been completely occupied by the Germans. They were not allowed to speak Polish. So what schooling they got, they had to learn in German and to speak German in school. Then my father, well I hate to switch, but he actually served in Kaiser Wilhelm's cavalry. Because they were forced into this military service. He described his tall, black plumes for hats or something he wore on his head.

Chall: Well, that was rather a special place that he was put into, then, if he was in the cavalry. I don't know whether it was considered a part of the elite corps or not.

Sankary: I don't know either. He was a tall and slim man and very handsome. [Laughs] I would like to have a picture of that. But anyway by coming to the States, they avoided World War I.

Chall: They were isolated enough so they weren't affected by World War I?

Sankary: Yes, and somehow he wasn't drafted here. I don't know how that happened.

So when they first came to the States they went to Pennsylvania. He worked, I think, in a coal mine there. That was new to him. Then when they homesteaded shortly thereafter in Dakota, he still would leave and go and work in a coal mine, come home just rarely. Because they had to have the money, I guess. They couldn't make it on that farm, without tools or anything.

Chall: Yes, people who did that were very courageous.

Sankary: She also said the buffalo would rub up against this house and she was so afraid it would fall down, you know, all these animals around. I remember as a child seeing an antelope just flying across the prairie, jumping the fences in the wild.

Chall: Your father--did he have some kind of education?

Sankary: I don't know what their education was, except that they spoke good German; so they did have that. And they did not speak terribly grammatical Polish because they weren't allowed to learn Polish grammar in school. So it's just what they picked up at home. Therefore I am always a little embarrassed when I try to speak Polish, which I do, because I know it's not grammatical. And she taught me how to read and write Polish.

Chall: Considering that, then she couldn't have been illiterate. She must have been able to read.

Sankary: No, they weren't illiterate. When I went away to school my father wrote to me in German. I guess it was all right. I took it to my German teacher to help me translate.

Chall: Did they learn English, except to speak it?

Sankary: Yes, and even at the time he died--he was only about sixty-nine I think, when he had the heart attack--he was still in school studying English. He studied it and learned it. And then she always wrote in English. It was very bad, really amusing--but she did it. She insisted on learning to read and write English on that farm.

Chall: What kind of religious background did they have?

Sankary: Catholic. We were all put through all the catechism. She was quite devout.

Chall: Was she? And your father, too?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: Was this Roman Catholicism?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: You were the--did you say the last of six?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: Who were the others, starting with the oldest? Was that a boy?

Sankary: No, it was a girl, Helen, and she's still living in San Diego. She married--somehow she met an army man. [Laughs] I don't know how she could have, out on that farm, but she did. She married him and then he got out of the army and also did some farming.

Chall: This is World War II?

Sankary: World War I. She was married before I was born. She was gone.

Chall: Oh, really. Had she been born in this country?

Sankary: Yes, just after they arrived. But she married at sixteen. And then the next one was a boy, Frank. He was very talented musically. He was really bright. But he never did anything with it. He should have been an entertainer because he was a comedian, an entertainer-type.

Chall: What is he doing now?

Sankary: He died of cancer when he was about fifty-five, which was about ten years ago I guess. He never did anything in the entertainment field, but he did teach me to tap dance when I was little on the farm. He left early, too; he went to the city to work.

Chall: City--being what?

Sankary: Oh, he went to Bismarck, and Minneapolis, and Spokane. And the next one was a girl. She was seven years older than I. Since I was born about Christmas she just sort of assumed this was something Santa Claus brought. So she really raised me. She spent a lot of time with me and we're very close now. She lives in San Diego. We've always been just terribly close. I just idolized her. I wore all her clothes and so forth. Her name is Theo, Theodora. And then between her and me there was another brother, Roman. Somewhere in there a girl died at three; there was a girl born and she was very little when she died.

Roman is now out on that farm where we were all born, where I went to school in that little one-room schoolhouse two miles away--all eight grades in one room. They just spread out, these large farms. So he bought that area and he's preserving that little schoolhouse where we all went. [Laughs]

Chall: And then following Roman?

Sankary: Was me.

Chall: And then you think there might have been a few deaths along the way?

Sankary: One girl died at three.

Chall: After you?

Sankary: No, it was somewhere before me, but I don't know where.

Chall: I see. So you were always then the youngest?

Sankary: Yes. So the others had to work on the farm, but by the time I came along--they moved off the farm when I was seven. So I never got into the farming part very much.

Chall: But you were seven, so you can have some memories of that large prairie and the struggle.

Sankary: Yes. I was caponizing and killing chickens and pigs, churning butter in an old wooden churn.

Chall: What was it like? What did your mother have to do as a mother on that land?

Sankary: Well, she did a lot of gardening. Before my time, at least, she talked about being in the wagons with the horses drawing the hay and the grain. She actually worked like a man out in the fields.

My uncle bought my brother, Roman, who was three years older than I a little Ford Model T coupe for him to go to school in. He was only eight years old--can you imagine that? Because there wasn't any traffic out there so they gave him this little coupe to go to school. He drove it at eight years, can you imagine? From the time that I was ten I drove our Buick Sedan alone, on errands, like to bring my sister home for the weekend.

And in the winter when we couldn't drive to school, then we had a little sleigh with a metal hood over it to keep out the frost because it got very cold. She warmed large stones in the fire and she put them in there to keep me warm under all the blankets. Then the horse would take us to school. When we'd come to these big snow banks sometimes this thing would roll over and all these rocks were falling around. [Laughter] It was circular so it would roll. And we rode a horse to school sometimes. That was fun. And some of the time we walked through the fields. I was always afraid of the bulls and the cows out there.

I remember my brother learning to drive the tractor and plowing, or doing the raking of the soil, you know--drawing the thing behind the tractor. So I'd go along on this tractor. We were just children. When he'd have to turn around and go down the next furrow, then I'd drive the tractor [laughter] and we'd come home just black with soil.

Sankary: Then I remember a lot of turkeys and pigs and a big windmill that I never had the courage to climb up. I'd go as high as I could and then I couldn't go any higher. Then they built larger buildings. There was a hayloft up high and I'd jump off of the thing onto the hay. That was, oh that always made tears come to my eyes; it was so frightening. I don't know if this is boring to you or not.

Chall: No, it's fine because people are now trying to reconstruct what it was like to live in that era.

Sankary: And all those rattlesnakes out there! And the wind howling every day. All his life my dad tried to grow trees and he couldn't. He just kept planting trees all the time, and never would they grow. I don't know--it's too windy or too dry or something.

And then we'd have so many things: The Army Worms would come traveling through. The ground would be just covered with a bug that destroyed everything. And as you walk on top of this stuff, it makes this crunchy sound--just miles wide. And frost, and droughts, and rust on the crops. I remember running through the fields and pulling mustard and other weeds out of the wheat fields. We could see them at a distance and we'd all just always spread out and make a line and then we'd run across the field and pull them out. Oh, there's just so much! I don't know if this is boring or not?

Chall: Did your mother make her own butter?

Sankary: Yes, everything.

Chall: Did you have cows?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: And it was mostly your mother who had this work to do with the help of...Your older sister was already gone?

Sankary: Yes, our family. But I had the younger sister home, Theo, and my brother and I. So there were three of us at home.

Chall: So did you work growing the family subsistence, the foods that you ate?

Sankary: Yes, right, everything.

Chall: One of the persons I interviewed once who had grown up just this way in--I think it was North Dakota, in an even earlier period, remembers the family slaughtering the cattle and hogs at just about winter time, hanging the meat, letting it freeze, and then putting it in the attic so that it would stay safe through the winter.

Sankary: What we had was a little square smokehouse. It would look almost like an outhouse and about that size. And they hung it in there and smoked it. I don't know how many carcasses or how many months. We also canned fruit and vegetables and put them into the cyclone cellar for cold storage, as well as potatoes. The cellar was full of lizards and I hated going down there to fetch things. I remember when little pigs and chickens and things were born they'd bring them in the house in a box under the stove to keep them warm.

And there were a lot of rattlesnakes I remember.

Chall: How did you manage? Were any of you bitten?

Sankary: No, but you know I'd run through the fields and often I would be barefooted; I just loved to go barefoot. I remember stepping right in the middle of one that was all coiled up [laughing] and I just kept going. I was lucky. But I'd see them when they'd swallow something like a bird or frog--ooh!

Chall: Well, you learned quite a bit.

Sankary: Ooh, yes! And I remember hundreds of Indian arrows. I keep wondering why I didn't save those--those arrowheads, and arrows, and rattlers I had.

Chall: Were there Indians still nearby when you were there?

Sankary: They would go by in groups and they'd dance at night and put on a little show. I don't know what the purpose of that was.

Chall: There were reservations then. Were they near you?

Sankary: No, there weren't any reservations near us and I don't know why these groups of Indians would travel through, but always in groups.

Chall: At a certain time of the year?

Sankary: Probably. I know the people would just join in. We would join in and dance with who was dancing. I don't know why that was. I was too young to find out.

Chall: As you look back, did you just think that this was sort of the normal way to live?

Sankary: Yes, I was very happy out there. I was very happy out there. When I learned to walk, I'd follow the other two kids to school. Then the teacher would make them turn around and walk me back home the two miles and as soon as they let loose of me, I'd follow them back to school. [Laughter] So by the time I was three, I was in the



- Sankary: Christmas programs, saying poems. Yes [laughter], I really was! I can remember getting up there when I was a little kid saying those silly little Christmas poems up there on the stage. I memorized and recited "The Night Before Christmas" entirely, before I entered first grade.
- Chall: What kind of school was it if you were so isolated? How big could the school have been?
- Sankary: Well, there were eight rows, there would probably be ten in each row. I'm estimating the classes. And then there would be a black pot bellied stove in the middle and we'd put potatoes in there in the morning--in the ashes. And by noon they'd be cooked, smelling so wonderful I recall it to this day. The teacher would live with various families. So we often had the teacher living with us.
- Chall: This then would be a school for about how many families around would you say?
- Sankary: Maybe twenty or thirty.
- Chall: I see. And all the classes were in the one room?
- Sankary: Yes, and that school was just miles for many people. I think I was lucky to have only two miles to walk.
- Chall: I see. Yes, the others had to come long distances.
- Sankary: Yes.
- Chall: During the school year?
- Sankary: Nine months, yes.
- Chall: What would happen if it were extremely cold? Would you not have school during the winter months?
- Sankary: I don't remember that ever happening. Always went. And then when I was three, in June, a big cyclone came through. It was a tornado, but we called it a cyclone. It sort of jumped and hit various people. It hit our place. It was early in the evening and my mother had put me to bed. I could see the lightning and I remember all the excitement. There was so much excitement in the house. But I stayed there. And she took Theo and Roman down into the basement. We had a cyclone cellar but we didn't go into it. She just got them down under the house into a basement in time and then she ran up the stairs at the last minute and grabbed me. I remember she grabbed the bedspread, too. We just got down in the basement, up against the west wall in the corner. We had some pillars on the porch and

Sankary: one of them came down cattycorner like this [gestures], slantwise right over our heads.

My older brother and my dad were still in the house when it went. They were carried quite a distance I guess before it all collapsed. But there were cars and machinery and things and they all slid down this pillar. They would have come right down on top of us, but they just slid down the pillar. Mother had covered me up like this [demonstrates], bending her body completely over mine, and then she took my brother's head and put it--

Chall: Wrapped them inside like a bird.

Sankary: Yes. And the thing that happened was that so much sand came down on top of us that we all nearly suffocated under it. I remember not being able to get my breath. But it was over very quickly. The machinery was twisted, you know these heavy tractors and cars. It was just like toys had been twisted. Just such power, it just went around-round-round-round-round.

As we were trying to pull ourselves out of this sand, my dad came over to the edge of the basement and under the lightning we could see a stream of blood was coming out of his head. It was pouring rain and out of all the buildings that had been on this farm, an amazing thing happened. There was a little straw shack. The big buildings all went, but the little straw shack that had been used for the pigs stood. My parents had to get us out of the rain and Mother wanted to do something with my dad! He helped us out of the cellar and then collapsed. We went into this little shack. All his clothes had been torn off of him. Mother packed the wet straw, it was raining hard, into his wounds, trying to stop this blood. He had a large gash in his side too. Then she covered me with this wet straw trying to keep me warm. Then some of the neighbors could see what had happened. You know it's just prairies for miles--nothing to obstruct the view. When they saw that all the buildings were gone on our place, some neighbors came over in their car and picked us up and took us to their house. The next day somehow they had gotten ahold of an ambulance to come out and get my dad. He was still alive. They took him to the train and to Miles City, Montana, the closest city of any size with a hospital. He was there for many, many months.

Chall; Is that right? He really had been severely wounded then?

The Moves to Scranton, N.D. and then to San Diego, California

Sankary: Yes, he was there for months and he never worked again because he developed arthritis. So by the time I was seven we had to leave the farm.

So we moved into the little town of Scranton, North Dakota. He had had a little life insurance policy that paid disability income. So that's what we lived on. We were lucky to have that. We had a little house there. From then on, until he died, my mother and dad were together all the time. They were doing a little gardening around the house. He never felt well.

Chall: He never did anything except stay at home as if he were retired?

Sankary: Yes. And he suffered so from this arthritis that he couldn't sit up. They told him that he needed a warm climate because of that very cold.... So that's what brought us to San Diego when I was eleven.

Chall: So you were only in Scranton for about four years?

Sankary: We lived in Scranton for four years, yes.

Chall: Did you find that your mother was a little happier in the city area, away from the farm? Did you notice that it changed her in any way?

Sankary: No, not her. She was a very stable, wonderful, wonderful woman. The only thing that bothered her that I recall was when she got the news that her mother and dad had died. They died and she hadn't ever seen them again. She had left Poland at nineteen and never saw them again. It was a difficult thing for her. But she was always a contented and happy person. There wasn't any change. And then when we decided to come to San Diego, all of these things must have been a hard adjustment for her. I didn't think about it. But she was the kind that made friends every place she went and was contented. He was very dependent on her. But when he came to San Diego, the climate was miraculously curing to him.

Chall: It was?

Sankary: Yes, he felt very good the rest of his life.

Chall: But they still worked together at home?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: And he didn't work?

Sankary: No.

Chall: Did all of you come out together?

Sankary: Just Roman and I, because Theo had gone to Bismarck and taken a secretarial course. Then she got married. Eventually she moved to San Diego with her husband.

Chall: When you moved into a city like Scranton, was there a Catholic church?

Sankary: Yes. And I went to catechism.

Chall: Was that your first introduction then to the Church?

Sankary: No, there was a little tiny church out in the country that we went to on Sundays.

Chall; Were there many German people in this area homesteading? Is that the reason your parents settled there?

Sankary: Yes, there were all kinds of nationalities. There were Swedes and Norwegians and Polish. Let's see what else did I know there? I don't know what the others were. There were other farms there by the time I was born.

Chall: Was there any prejudice against Catholics?

Sankary: No. I don't believe so. I think the kids kind of teased me about being Polish. That was something--but there were a lot of other nationalities so I don't think I suffered from that too much.

Chall: I don't think I asked you what your father's name was. I got your mother's.

Sankary: Michael, Mehile they called him.

Chall: Was this his first name?

Sankary: Yes, M-I-C-H-A-E-L which was pronounced Mehile.

Chall: And what was his last name?

Sankary: Kaczmarek, K-A-C-Z-M-A-R-E-K. And that "c" confused everybody, so we dropped it and everybody easily called us "Kazmarek" then. His brother somehow got the "c" turned into an "r" and my cousin who is a professor at Stanford medical school, has K-A-R-Z-M-A-R-E-K.

Chall: And you always left the entire Polish name, though, except for changing that one difficult consant?

Sankary: Yes.

[end tape 1, side A; begin tape 1, side B]

[Insert added by Wanda Sankary while editing]

Sankary: One of the fondest memories of my childhood is harvest time when we went in to the railroad depot and picked up a truckful of "bums." Some of the men came back year after year. They just rode the freights to the various states wherever seasonal work was available. They slept on the ground and sang around the guitar player. My mom was very busy cooking huge meals for the crew of about ten to twenty. I fell in love with one blond very young man and followed him over all the fields and was broken hearted when he left. I was five, about.

Until I left the farm, at seven, I rode my horse all day, herding cattle or just for fun. After I left the farm I still spent parts of the summers on my friend Alleyne's farm, riding horses and working the Ouija Board. (It lies.)

I did have another unforgettable experience. There was a burning coal mine near our home into which cattle might stray, and I can still hear them bellowing as they slowly burned to death. At night when the wind was blowing harder than usual there were bright flares making a beautiful sight against the black sky. I learned to swim jumping into a bottomless mine pit.

But the real crisis came when I fell into the burning part of the mine. I was walking along near it and the grass did not look any dryer so I didn't realize the mine had burned that far. But the crust gave away and I found myself sinking into hot ashes. As I reached for tufts of grass, each movement only dropped me in deeper, and the grass gave away. Miraculously I pulled myself gingerly out onto solid crust, but sustained severe burns to the lower half of my body.

Living so far north also provided an exciting, almost frightening, sight of the Northern Lights. While the coyotes were howling and the incessant wind screaming, the lights moving in the sky present an unforgettable emotional memory-haunting experience.

Frank started us all on music lessons, which must have been "pain" for my parents out in the country where teachers were scarce. I wanted the piano but he chose the sax for me, drums for Roman, and violin for Theo. I ran and hid and had to be forced. I hated it. But I played the sax on the farm, in Scranton, and in South Dakota school bands and orchestras even when no one but me was forcing it anymore. One day when I was about 16 my little B<sup>b</sup> soprano sax was stolen, and I was glad. Since then I've started piano three times. Each time a tragedy stopped it--twice I cut off a finger accidentally. I still can't, but want to play it.

Sankary: I was a very sensitive and sentimental child and still am--crying (on the farm) when my sister was playing the haunting theme from "Tales of Hoffman," or at visits from or to my brother Frank after he left the farm for the city. I still feel the tearing of my heart. I needed people then, too, so when I couldn't play with Theo and Roman (we had a perpetual merchandising game going that we invented) I walked over to a neighbor's house one mile away where there were lots of children, and stayed two to three days or until they sent me home. This was the only thing in my memory that I was punished for and I do remember how afraid of my mom I was at those times when I was coming home.

One other memory of my early years was the walk to the outhouse alone during the night--it was quite a long way. I still think this was a dangerous trek.

I was three when the cyclone hit; yet I remember the interior of the house prior to that, and my rocking horse, and hearing the song on the gramophone, "Oh the sun shines bright on pretty red red wing--" [end insert]

Chall: We were discussing I think about your mother's adjustment, and your parents' general adjustment to all these changes in their lives.

Sankary: Well, when we went to school we couldn't speak English, any of us kids. But we were all good students. I know I always was a top-flight student. [Laughs] Very serious about my studies and everyone else in the family was too.

Chall: Was this encouraged? Did they feel that in the United States you got ahead if you did well in school?

Sankary: I don't recall any encouragement from them. I don't recall any encouragement from my parents, but they went to the trouble of learning English, too, learning to read and write it with us. It was very amusing all my mother's life; she'd pick up so much slang and then get it all screwed up and say it wrong. She was really very amusing to listen to, interspersing all this American slang in her broken English. She'd write it that way, too. [Laughs] Very funny.

Chall: Was her contact when they moved to San Diego with the Church?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: What kind of social life did she find here?

Sankary: With the Church and they also liked to play cards. We used to have dances out on the farm. They always liked to dance. So I learned to dance when I learned to walk. And I rode a horse from the time I could walk, too.

Chall: Well, did you miss the farm when you moved into the city?

Sankary: Yes, indeed! It was a little of an adjustment for me in the city. It wasn't the same anymore. I remember not being as happy in Scranton. But then when I came to San Diego, I liked that a lot better. Somehow I mixed better in school or at least it was such a large school--hundreds of students--and so I didn't feel so conspicuous, and found close companionship at last.

Chall: Let's see 1919 and eleven, that's 1930 you moved here.

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: Just about the time when the Depression was hitting.

Sankary: Yes.

San Diego: Jobs, Schools and Illness, 1930-1942

Chall: Was your father's pension enough to survive?

Sankary: Yes, we got by. But I always worked. I always had a job of some kind. I started when I was eleven years old taking care of children. I was very ambitious. I don't know where I got all this ambition. All through my high school and grade school, I always had jobs. We all did. It wasn't that my mother ever urged us to, or my dad. They didn't encourage us to study.

The only thing I remember about my mother encouraging me to do anything, was to have a good time. She said, "Have all the fun you can while you're young." [Laughs] So if I would turn down a date or something, they'd always say, "Oh, no. You should go." [Laughs]

Chall: Do you think she felt she'd missed something?

Sankary: I imagine she did. She didn't have all the fun so she sort of lived through all the fun I was having and enjoyed hearing about it. She'd even come to the dances when she was quite old just to watch us dance.

Chall: Where would this be? What kind of dances?

Sankary: Ballroom dancing.

Chall: I see. In big halls?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: Yes, that was the era of the big bands and the big halls.

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: When you said you felt less conspicuous by being in San Diego in a big school--by that you meant what--what was your conspicuousness before?

Sankary: Well, when I moved into the little town I think there was a little--I don't know, I was off the farm. I was a farm kid and they were little snobbish city kids. I didn't feel accepted completely. I don't think the whole time I lived there did I feel completely happy and accepted. I felt as if I were different. I recall we lived across the street from a motel on this gravel highway that crossed the state. Somebody came by with a little girl my age. He was a professor at U.C. Berkeley. In getting acquainted with this girl and talking to them I got in my mind "That's where I'm going to go to college." And I just couldn't wait to get out of there and come to California. [Laughs]

Chall: You knew you were getting closer to your goal, is that it?

Sankary: Yes. So when they decided to go to San Diego I decided that was going to be just right. I was happy in San Diego.

Chall: Were you in public school?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: Your parents never felt the need of putting you in parochial schools?

Sankary: No, they didn't. And they didn't give us that much religion either. I know the priest came to the house one time and complained because I wasn't studying my catechism.

Chall: If your mother was very devout, why do you think she didn't require that study?

Sankary: She was just that lenient. She never asked me to do the dishes or do any work around the house. I don't know why. She just spoiled me to death. She'd never ask me to do anything. Or to go to catechism, or to not go to catechism. Being the last child she just, I guess, sort of spoiled me. At that time she had a lot of time. When she had the other children she was very busy and they had to work and help her. I guess she felt that maybe that was too bad.

Chall: So did you feel spoiled as you look back on it?



Sankary: No, I didn't. I have just felt very close to her, very, very close.

Chall: And what were your relationships with your father? Were you also his darling daughter?

Sankary: Well, he did spoil me, too, I guess. You know he had nothing else to do.

Chall: How did he spend his time?

Sankary: He always went to these clubs where they had shuffleboard and other games, and to parks, and he enjoyed singing, and he played cards. Mother did, too. They had a very pleasant relationship and old age.

Chall: What about Roman? What was he doing then? He was going to school in San Diego?

Sankary: Yes, he went to school and he went to college a couple of years. He went into the army. My dad had rented the farm out. Roman decided to go back and try his luck at farming. He's been there ever since.

Chall: Very interesting. Do you go back and see the farm from time to time?

Sankary: I haven't been there for many years. When I go it's just so sentimental for me. It's really painful.

Chall: Has he married, and does he have a family there?

Sankary: Yes, he has a big family there.

Chall: So that was really a happy time for you then, the farm?

Sankary: Yes, it was.

Chall: The first impressionable years.

Sankary: Yes, very happy.

Chall: When you came here you were eleven. You were already what, you were at the end of your grammar school years?

Sankary: I went into the ninth grade, I think.

Chall: No, maybe seventh?

Sankary: Yes, I guess so. I'm trying to think. Yes, I was in junior high, Woodrow Wilson Jr. High, but I don't remember what grade. And I know the English class here was so easy; oh, I was way advanced in English. I don't know why we learned, we really concentrated on English grammar in Dakota, I guess.

- Chall: Maybe because there were so many foreign people that they had to teach you English.
- Sankary: I guess so. I was so bored in their English classes all through school here. I had it all. [Laughter] It is funny, isn't it? I still feel, when I raised my children, that they didn't do much studying of English and grammar like we did. We memorized poems. They really worked us.
- Chall: And then where did you go to high school?
- Sankary: Hoover High in San Diego. I was a straight A. I had so many jobs you can't imagine [laughing].
- Chall: What did you do?
- Sankary: Oh, I worked in a theatre box office at night and I worked every weekend in a department store. I was fifteen when I got that job--I lied about my age. I said I was eighteen and I think they knew better in that department store. I worked there for three years every weekend and holiday.
- Chall: Selling?
- Sankary: Selling.
- Chall: Anything special?
- Sankary: In the men's department. This man had a tricky way of making you work. He'd post in the women's room the total of all the sales that everyone did. And the ones who sold the least--he'd fire a certain number at the bottom all the time. So you had to work hard. I found that I could sell more to men than to women because women would think about it and compare. Men would walk in and say, "Well, I want five shirts," and that's all there is to it. So I kept my sales up by just insisting I wanted that department [laughing].
- Chall: Is this department store still in existence?
- Sankary: National Dollar Stores. I don't know if they're still in existence or not. I think they are in San Diego but I don't know if it's a national chain or not.
- Chall: Was it owned by Chinese?
- Sankary: Yes.
- Chall: Yes, they are a chain.

Sankary: Yes, he was a Chinese, a big Chinese man. I also got a job in a radio station in a little serial. They didn't have television then, you know. [Laughter]

Chall: What were you doing, reading?

Sankary: Yes. Well, I was in the play. They'd give us lines to read rather than to memorize in this little serial. I thought that was a lot of fun. When the movie studios would come into town I'd get jobs as an extra. Then I also worked for the Padres Baseball Team. On Sundays they had baseball games and I'd sell in the candy booths, or I'd sell the cushions.

Then I got another job. On our corner there was an optometrist. He asked me to work for him afternoons, after school--just as a receptionist. But he was the president of the California Optometric Association. He had very advanced methods; he had a bunch of eye-exercise machines. He worked with children. They'd look into this machine and somehow, if they were cross-eyed or anything, he could straighten their eyes out rather than giving them lenses all the time. It was a very rewarding thing. He taught me how to run these things. So children would come in for these eye exercises. I worked there. Let me see, what else did I do? Oh, I did a little waiting on tables.

Chall: You were ambitious.

Sankary: I always worked. Then I worked for a man who sold Wearever--I think it was Wearever--aluminum. He'd put on these dinners in homes for twenty people and then he'd try to sell them these pots. So I'd help him cook the meal and then I had to do all those dishes while he was giving them his spiel. That took till eleven o'clock at night. And I cleaned houses. I always did babysitting and cleaning houses, too.

Chall: You really didn't have to ask your parents for any money, did you?

Sankary: No, never. I supported myself all the way through. And the school cafeteria--I worked at noon so I got my lunch there free. And I always took hard subjects: chemistry, and physics, and foreign languages. I didn't play around. I took a lot of math. And I always got straight A's. Straight A through high school.

Chall: What was your goal? Did you have an idea about what you were going to do?

Sankary: No.

Chall: Just liked studying.

Sankary: I knew I was going to college. There just wasn't any doubt in my mind. I remember how shocked I was that some of those kids didn't go to college. It was unthinkable! We just had that much drive. But I didn't know what I was going to do. Well, the optometrist talked me into going into the school of optometry in Berkeley.

Chall: Is that right? Even as a woman?

Sankary: Yes. Well, I didn't know what else to do so I went into the school of optometry at Berkeley. I took what amounted to a lot of physics and pre-med courses. We actually cut up the cadavers like the medical students were doing. The thing that got me was the physics end of it. Some of those labs were just too hard for me. I couldn't work with bending rays of light and all of this--too technical. I was floundering.

At that time, which I'm jumping a little ahead, I was married to a boy from Scranton, North Dakota. World War II had started and he was a pilot in the navy. I went with him for three years and when I married him I was in Berkeley. In five months he had crashed and was killed. My life was just thrown up in the air. So I went back to San Diego and got a job as an investigator.

Chall: Let me get those dates. You finished high school in about--

Sankary: 1937.

Chall: 1937. And did you marry?

#### Time Out to Recuperate from Tuberculosis

Sankary: No, then I went to San Diego State--college then, it's a university now--for two years. I was just taking general things. I majored in physics and minored in math, intending to go to Berkeley.

Chall: So you did get through two years of physics and math?

Sankary: Yes, and there it was easy. But at Cal it was a lot harder. The thing that happened then--I got tuberculosis.

Chall: When?

Sankary: In 1939, when I was nineteen, I think.

Chall: You hadn't gone to Berkeley yet?

Sankary: No.

Chall: And you hadn't married yet?

Sankary: No.

Chall: Okay. You got tuberculosis. You must have been burning the candle at both ends.

Sankary: I was, because I was a very healthy child I thought. Everybody else had measles and my sister had scarlet fever when I was a little girl. I never caught any of the things that the rest of the family caught. I don't know why. I never was sick.

I got a severe pain in my back and it was just like a knife had gone through me. What had happened was the lung had filled with pleurisy fluid. That saved me because it's such an insidious disease. There's no pain with it. You don't know you have it until it's too late. But because I got pleurisy they discovered this little spot. Because all through the whole treatment my skin test on my arm was still negative. And my sputum was negative. There was no indication ever that I had TB. But when I got that pleurisy which was so painful, the lung collapsed with the fluid. So I went into the TB hospital. Oh, that was a terribly emotional traumatic experience.

Chall: Where was that?

Sankary: In San Diego.

Chall: There was a hospital here?

Sankary: Yes. And first thing every day they put this long hollow needle down into my chest and draw out this fluid and then fill it with air, to keep the lung collapsed. And there weren't any antibiotics. There was no cure for it.

Chall: Yes, just rest and fresh air.

Sankary: And they'd put these heavy bags of sand on your chest. You had to lay in bed constantly, just constantly. Then you kept your lung from working by putting heavy bags of sand on your chest. I lay for two years and emotionally it was just a terrible experience. I was so lonely, you know. Suddenly no dancing; they allowed no visitors; they allowed, twice a week, two members of the family. So I saw none of my friends. I couldn't do any of the things that I loved to do. All that activity just suddenly stopped. It was a terrible shock. I almost had to learn to walk over again. It took so long to be able to walk!

Chall: They didn't even let you get up and walk around?

Sankary: No, no exercise at all.

Chall: My, that was the real bold treatment, wasn't it?

Sankary: Yes, it was. And then for three years after that I just had to lay down a lot. But those that didn't--friends that I made in that hospital--died. I had the determination to do it.

Chall: Were there many in there your age?

Sankary: Not terribly, no. I only saw the women. There were some that died my age, yes. It was a very hard blow. So when I got out of that, that two years I was--

Chall: That was from 1939 to about 1941, then, you were hospitalized?

Sankary: Yes, I was very careful. I lay down a lot. I never went out on a date anymore, never danced. They didn't let me do any exercise of any kind--couldn't ride a horse, or do anything.

Chall: How many years was that?

Sankary: It's two years flat on my back and three years of no exercise. And then I felt that it was contained sufficiently so I almost could lead a normal life.

So, in 1940 is when he came to San Diego, Allen Young, whom I married. He was in the navy. I'd say I went with him three years although we never went out. [Laughs] Poor guy. And then he'd go away for months. One time I wrote a nasty letter to the navy. They called him up before the board about it! To show you how aggressive I was. [Laughing] They had told him he was only going to go on cruise for four months. They kept him six. I wrote a letter of complaint. I wasn't even married to him. My gosh, he was so embarrassed. They called him up in front of the admiral. [Laughing hard] The war was on then; "What are you telling her?" Oh, gee.

Then I went to Berkeley. [Autumn, 1941] In between studying at the school of optometry in Berkeley and Law school, the war broke out and I worked at Convair on blueprints in the Engineering Department for a year or less, when I left to marry my pilot, Allen Young. We lived in Alameda and I commuted to Berkeley by bus taking general courses, not knowing in what profession I really wanted to be.

My first marriage was in Reno; my second in Yuma, but both were deep lifetime commitments, contrary to the sometimes limpid relationships with big pretentious church weddings. However to please my mother, Morrie [Morris Sankary] and I were married again in the Catholic Church.

World War II Widow: Trauma and Recovery

Chall: Did you go to Berkeley before you were married?

Sankary: Yes. And he was stationed in Florida. He got himself transferred to Alameda because of me. And soon thereafter I married him.

Chall: Can you tell me that date?

Sankary: I married him in December of '42, I guess because July 2 of '43 was the day he was killed. He was sending me letters every day from the South Pacific. He was in Nandi, Fiji Islands. It was night flying and they thought it might be sabotage at first, but I don't think it was. He just crashed at the end of a runway for no reason except the night flying search lights might have blinded him.

Chall: You were then still in Berkeley?

Sankary: Yes. But I quit school and came home to San Diego. He was sending me letters every day and one arrived every day after he was dead. Oh, gee, my poor sister, she went through a terrible experience. The wire came to San Diego that said that he had been killed. She didn't want to tell me over the phone, she wanted to be with me when this news broke. During wartime the civilians couldn't travel. It took her seventeen hours to get to Berkeley on those planes. She arrived there about three o'clock in the morning, because they put her off in L.A. and she sat and she couldn't get on a plane. There were no seats. She just had a terrible time getting to Berkeley.

But she had called from San Diego and she was crying when she called, and told the people I was rooming with. I had a room in a private home. She told them not to tell me, but told them what had happened. And that she was coming up there. But she said to make sure that I stayed and waited for her. So when I took the phone and she was crying, she said, "Something terrible happened. I can't tell you on the phone but I'm coming up there." And I thought, "My god, she's running from the police. She's killed somebody." [Laughing] So I waited for her all day and all night. She finally got there with that telegram. When she gave me that wire, she collapsed from exhaustion. So I was alone anyway. [Laughing] It was a terrible night, oh, it was terrible.

She got ahold of a chaplain, a Catholic priest, the next day. He was so nice. He arranged for transportation back to San Diego. They apparently had seats saved for emergencies, for priests to give out.

Chall: Did you feel at that point that your life had just dropped out from under you?

Sankary: I just went into shock. For months I had hallucinations and I'd hear things like doors opening and closing. The doctors, you know in those days--I don't know if I just couldn't find the right doctor, but nobody could help me. They just said, "It's a shock to your nervous system and that's why you're having all these problems." Terrible dreams. I went through about five years of hell I think before I got over this. I had heard of others who had such a shock who ended up in the mental institution.

Chall: So it was hard to accept this?

Sankary: Just terrible. I kept so busy. I got a job in the most demanding and interesting profession I could think of: as an investigator. [Laughter] I applied for it with an old firm in San Diego, Le Barron Company.

Chall: A detective?

Sankary: Yes, but most of it was investigation for insurance companies and major law firms. But there was just endless work. He, Mr. Le Barron, couldn't get any help because of the war. When I applied for a job at this prestigious thirty-year-old firm, Mr. LeBarron thundered at me, "What makes you think you can do this kind of work?" He did give me a trial and paid me according to his confidence: fifteen dollars a week. But he raised me regularly until finally I was manager. I had a car for my own use and unlimited gasoline furnished to me (during rationing)!

I worked like fifteen, sixteen hours a day just to keep occupied because I didn't want to go to bed. As soon as I'd lay down and be alone I was just so unhappy. I was afraid to go to sleep because of the war dreams I had. So I just worked so hard for that man. [Laughing] He said in thirty years no one had made so much money for him as I did. [Laughing]

Chall: Were you living at home?

Sankary: Yes, with my mother and dad. This man really got a lot of work out of me because I knew how to get information when nobody else could. I had contacts at all military bases to enter restricted areas to locate and interview my subject. I really was a good investigator and I made a nationwide name for myself. I investigated highway patrol and railroad accidents, fires, and criminal cases, going into places alone that today would be impossibly dangerous.

Chall: How many years did you do it?



Law School, 1945-1950

Sankary: Over two years, July, '43 to fall of '45. At that time he made me manager of the company and I was only twenty-four. I also was having fun dancing and I was much in demand partly because I had a car and gasoline. When I was twenty-five I went to law school. The state provided education for widows of California veterans. It was free. So I eagerly went back to school. [Laughs] I didn't know what else to study except law because I worked for a lot of law firms in San Diego. One prominent attorney I worked for, Cy Monroe, told me, however, "If I had known what I do now, I wouldn't have the courage to go into law." But I wouldn't be frightened out of it. At that age I plunged in ravenously.

Chall: As an investigator you would have?

Sankary: Yes. I made such a good name for myself. I was the best one. They all say that even now. I worked for Phil Swing, the ex-congressman from San Diego. He was a very prominent man. He's the one who got the Hoover Dam built that brought all the water into southern California. I worked for really big law firms and prominent lawyers who later became judges. Years later they'd say, "You were the best investigator I ever had." They wouldn't have anyone but me on any of their cases. I really worked hard. I'm sorry that the ones most important in this period are now dead, and I can't get an "introduction" from them for this book.

Chall: Where did you decide to go to law school?

Sankary: USC. [University of Southern California]

Chall: Now the fact that you were there on veteran's privilege, did they have to accept you whether you were a woman or not? Was there a problem getting in?

Sankary: Well, a funny thing happened. It was in the fall of '45 when the war ended. They had millions of applicants, all on the G.I. bill. So the competition was just the worst in history. But there was a woman who worked for the dean. She was an older woman, his secretary. She gave these tests that would qualify people to go to law school. I always felt that she gave me more time than she gave the others because I couldn't answer half of those questions and I'd think and think and think. And I thought to myself, "There must be a time limit." And she never came in to say, "Time's up." She gave me so much time I was sure to pass that darn test. Awfully high.

I always feel grateful to her. I don't know her name anymore and she wasn't there when I started classes. After she gave the test then she left and the dean got a new secretary. But I always feel

Sankary: grateful that I would never have made it if it hadn't been for that woman helping this woman. I think she favored me because I was a girl among all these millions of men applying.

Chall: Were you the only girl in the law school?

Sankary: No, there were five or so in the law school. And there were several hundred students. I'd say maybe nine hundred students altogether in law school, all men. But in so many of the classes, like there'd be two hundred men and one girl, me. [Laughing]

Chall: Because there were so few of you?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: You think there were four or five entering women that year?

Sankary: No, there were that many through the three years. They weren't all freshmen women. When I started law school I realized I had found my niche. It suited my mind. It was a different kind of a mental exercise, to think logically, to follow thoughts around corners. It was the first time since high school that I really enjoyed studying.

I was a very good law student because I think they were tougher on women. I know I was getting just top grades all the way. The very first semester I made the law review and I retained this honor every semester, contributing articles for publication. I also sold some articles to a magazine called "Medical Economics." The lower third of every class was dropped by USC because they had so many applicants. There were Ph.D.'s and Phi Beta Kappas that fell into that lower third and were given notice, and oh, did I get resentment. Especially when they were losing. The men that couldn't make it.

[end tape 1, side B; begin tape 2, side A]

Sankary: I remember remarks made by teachers that it was a waste of time to have a woman study law.

Chall: What did they think? Why was it a waste of time? Because they thought you wouldn't be able to practice?

Sankary: Well, one of them said, "Because they just get married and raise children and it's wasted." Other teachers, although they didn't say anything would just act as if I wasn't there. They never called on me. They'd ignore me completely. And others would just enjoy making it difficult. I was really quite naive when I went to law school. I didn't know very much. They'd get into raunchy cases maybe that involved sex, hideous crimes or something. Then they'd call on me, of course, for the very worst case to discuss.

Chall: So they didn't help you? They didn't throw too many roadblocks in your way, but they didn't help you?

Sankary: Yes, I certainly didn't get any preferential treatment, ever. The tests were not by name, but by number so I think that I got a fair shake when they gave me the grades, too. I studied all the time. I never went out that whole time. There was that drive again. It drives people crazy even today--if I get one thing on my mind to do--nothing stops me. I don't let anyone divert me even a little bit. It just annoys people around me--my companions. Because I'm like a bulldog pursuing something.

But it was so hard in law school to learn the vernacular, the language. Like they always said, "You always should have the first three years before you take the first class." [Laughs] Because it just all ties in. When they give you Contracts the first year, it has to do with things that you study the last year--corporations that have made contracts, for instance. You know nothing about a corporate set-up. So it's just very hard the first year. I really studied. And then when I got the grades, then I began to get some attention from the other students. I got a little respect. I'd either get resentment or just a little bit of respect and they'd want me to help them with their problems. It made me feel good.

Chall: Where did you live?

Sankary: Part of the time I had an apartment, once alone and other times I shared it with other women. Then I would rent rooms in a home near the campus--walking distance.

Chall: I see. And so you spent your time going to class, studying, and also working from time to time?

Sankary: No, I didn't work at all. But after two years I quit, went to work and then I returned a year and a half later.

Chall: Why was that?

Sankary: Well, I guess I needed the money. I still had a broken heart and I was searching for someone or something. And maybe the drag was getting me down a little. I felt so hemmed in.

Chall: Yes, it was confining.

Sankary: Very confining. It was almost the same as the experience with TB. I was just isolated too much. I went up to Washington, a little town, Ellensburg, where I had friends. I got a job with the Washington--unemployment compensation department. That took me to little towns, little mining towns up in the mountains giving out checks and interviewing people.

Chall: That was interesting to you?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: Well, you were sort of investigating. You were doing something like what you'd done before in San Diego. You were dealing again with people.

Sankary: Yes and it was a novelty to me to ski because I'd been raised in San Diego, so I learned to ski up there. I enjoyed that year. After that interlude I returned to school and finished.

Chall: At USC?

Sankary: Yes. There it was an entirely different class. My class had graduated. It was all new students again. [Laughs] Most everybody was new to me. I met my husband, Morris, in a class there, and I immediately knew I wanted him. We studied together. He was brilliant.

Chall: How far along was he by then?

Sankary: He was just as far along as I was because we graduated together. We took classes together and graduated together. Then I was offered a couple of really nice jobs. I was so attached to him I couldn't go. This was the crossroads that would have changed my whole life. One was an offer from Supreme Court Justice Douglas, of all people, to come and be a clerk.

Chall: Oh, what an honor.

Sankary: Yes, to interview for it and I guess I would have got it. The other one was a Justice Wey, I think W-e-y, in Honolulu. That would have appealed to me tremendously. I don't know how I got these offers.

Chall: You must have had very high standing in your class.

Sankary: Yes, I did. If I had gone to Washington, just think where I might have been today, the connections I would have made all the last thirty years.

Chall: But you decided to....

Sankary: Hang around and marry Morris. [Laughing]

Chall: Bitter?

Sankary: No! Well, I wonder what my life would have been. But I was always the sentimental type. I was always very sensitive, very sensitive. I'm not the hard politician type at all.

Chall: Well, maybe you felt you wanted to get married.

Sankary: Well, I'd gone through many years without finding anyone that meant anything to me.

Chall: Yes. This was what year, now when you were through with law school?

Sankary: 1950.

Chall: 1950. So that was quite a number of years since you had been widowed.

Sankary: Yes. I married him in '52.

Chall: Oh, I see. So this was just a romance at the time, in 1950?

Sankary: Ten years, it took me ten years to find someone I wanted. All that time I was very lonely. Oh there were lots of suitors, but I don't fall in love easily. It took me ten years.

Chall: And his name was Morris Sankary?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: 1952.

Sankary: Yes.

### Establishing a Legal Practice

Chall: What did you do between '50 and '52 then; did you work in a law firm in San Diego?

Sankary: On graduation I immediately went to work for the Los Angeles County Medical Association director researching laws in all the states for his lecture tours throughout the nation. I also was practicing law, fully, with lots of clients. I made more money the first few months than anyone I knew in my class. In fact, I hired several attorneys to work for me, including Morrie. I paid them two dollars an hour.

In L.A. [Los Angeles] I worked with Russell Parsons. I don't know if you've heard of him. He ran for mayor. He was rather a political type of attorney, not heavy in practicing law. Sometimes he represented prostitutes. I met some beautiful women in that field. About all he did was give me office space surprisingly, no

Sankary: salary. Then I gradually built up my own clientele through his office and in my own apartment.

In the meantime Morrie had been appointed by Gordon Dean to the Atomic Energy Commission in Oakridge. He went there for a couple months, and he didn't like it. He returned. Then Judge Carter, a federal judge, gave him a clerkship with him.

I was practicing law on my own, privately. I had a case against an ex-judge Sheehan in Santa Monica. I can't remember his first name but he was a retired judge who was practicing law. I beat him so badly in this case, because I really knew the law, and as you get older you don't know it anymore. You forget it, you know. So he wasn't doing so hot. I beat him so badly that he offered me a job. He said, "I'd rather have you with me than against me."

So I worked for him for, oh until I went to San Diego and married. When Judge Carter recommended Morrie for the U.S. Attorney spot in San Diego he took the opportunity because they needed a full-charge attorney. He was a very good attorney, too. He's brilliant and dedicated and thoroughly honest. While practicing law in San Diego for about two years I had to keep coming up to Los Angeles to finish cases that I had going. So I spent a lot of time in L.A.

Chall: This was after you were married?

Sankary: Yes, then I practiced law alone again in San Diego because he was the U.S. Attorney. Eventually he joined me.

Besides practicing law in an office I opened alone in the Bank of America Building in San Diego. I also taught law in the Adult Education program, one of the classes being on television, which was good training for the time when I entered politics a year later.

During the time we practiced law together I also for a time owned and operated a collection agency. When we went into the modular home construction business in 1969, it was before its time, and although we put in all our effort and money, \$500,000, it folded with the collapse of the general economy three years later. I am so sold on that great product we had, however, I would try it again, anytime.

Chall: I noticed the name of your law firm is Sankary and Sankary. I assumed you were still practicing law. Are you?

Sankary: Yes. Well, about a year ago we ran into some trouble. So I stopped working with him daily in the office and we stopped living together.

Sankary: We haven't gotten a divorce. It's just a very painful situation. I suppose we will.\* We're good friends but we just sort of lost each other on the way somewhere after all these years.

But I only practiced law about a year in San Diego when I got into the assembly race.

---

\*The Sankarys were divorced in mid-1977.

## II THE NEW CHALLENGES: POLITICS AND MOTHERHOOD

Winning Candidate for California Assembly, 1954

- Sankary: I never went to any political meetings. Never. I've never been to a political convention yet! So it was just out of the blue that these people that saw me practicing law decided I would make a good candidate and that I should run for the state assembly. I didn't know what an assemblyman was. And as usual I never turn anything down [laughter]. So I got into this campaign not knowing a thing about politics. I didn't know one issue from another. Really, I was terribly dumb as most voters are. I don't know how I ever got elected except that I went after it again like a bear.
- Chall: And you were pregnant?
- Sankary: Yes, but I didn't know it, until my name was on the ballot and then I couldn't get it removed from the ballot. Then I found out I was pregnant. Oh, was that ever a shocker!
- Chall: Now generally they say that in those days they would ask a woman to run when they needed a candidate for the office, but it was a pretty sure thing that she'd--
- Sankary: That she'd lose?
- Chall: That she'd lose.
- Sankary: Maybe that's what they thought.
- Chall: Well, I'm not sure. That's why I'm asking.
- Sankary: They never told me if that's so.
- Chall: Was this a Republican district primarily?
- Sankary: Yes.





1925 - School Transportation

My brother, sister & I drove this way to school in Dakota. In the winter the horse pulled a covered sled instead. Sometimes we rode horses.



1954 - 1st Campaign



Chall: And was there a Republican incumbent?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: Well, you see cross-filing was then not out but you at least had to designate, in 1954, your party. This was one of the first chances either for Republicans or Democrats, depending upon what the district was, to run under their party affiliations. Sometimes a party will put a person in a race in order to have somebody running, but they might not expect that person to win.

Sankary: They gave me absolutely no financial help. I didn't get one penny from the Democratic party.

Chall: This would have been the county central committee of San Diego?

Sankary: I don't know if they had any money they were so disorganized. There was no organization at all, at all.

Chall: Let me start from the beginning then. Who approached you to run? Can you remember who they were?

Sankary: Well, he is now a judge. He was an attorney then. Later he was in Sacramento, a state senator, I believe. He was very active in San Diego, and a Democrat, and a lawyer, so he became aware of me I guess in the court, because I went into trials like a bear [laughter] always doing my best to win, but fairly and honestly.

Chall: Well, you must have impressed them. Maybe they thought you had a chance.

Sankary: I don't know but he asked me if I wanted to do it. I wouldn't think of saying no.

Chall: What did your husband think?

Sankary: I guess he was for it, too. But an unfortunate thing happened then. This person who approached me was representing a bunch of builders who had done a lot of construction of veteran housing in San Diego. There were just thousands of houses.

There was a big scandal that came out, the Veterans' Scandal they called it--in which the president of the bank, the veterans' officials, and the builders were in a big conspiracy to milk money out of these houses into their own pockets. And Morrie being the U.S. Attorney had to prosecute all these people. There was a suicide and a death from heart attack. It went on for many months. It was a tremendous big, big scandal because there were millions of dollars involved. He'd prosecuted each one of them and convicted them. The man who had approached me to run was involved in this scheme as an

Sankary: attorney. I didn't know it. It cost him a lot of money. He lost, we heard, \$50,000 on just one deal which fell through because the frauds were exposed. Thereafter when I was already a candidate he came to me and he threatened both me and Morrie, mentioning disbarment and such.

Chall: This was after he had asked you to run?

Sankary: Yes. Then he wanted to drop me. He said, "If you don't get Morrie off of these cases...." You know, he wanted me to exercise some influence there and I couldn't do it. So we fell out. He dropped me and worked against me very, very hard. For many years he and I never had a word with each other. He was so bitter. And so many of the others that were involved worked against me and they happened to be Democrats. So I got nothing from the Republicans, of course, and I got nothing from the Democratic party. My worst enemies were in the Democratic party. They just did everything to defeat me, just out of malice.

Chall: Were they mostly Democrats that were aligned with him in this scandal?

Sankary: Yes, I think so.

Chall: Or at least he was important enough so that Democrats would be protective?

Sankary: Yes, because he was very active; he was the top of the Democratic party in San Diego, what there was. He was a very active Democrat and therefore, I think that most everyone he was associated with would have been a Democrat.

As a result I had to do it on my own. I figure over the total it cost us about \$100,000. I paid all my own workers; I paid everything out of my own pocket. I got absolutely no help from anybody, except some labor union support.

Chall: How did you learn to run a campaign?

Sankary: Just hit or miss. Many unsavory people came to me. There is always a cadre of flakes who try to attach themselves to some politician for their own nefarious ends. It takes some time and intuition to cull them from your campaign and recognize their time-consuming worthlessness, and the danger sometimes in associating with such political hacks. I guess I just wasn't very political. I was too straightforward. I'd say no in no uncertain terms and I suppose that made a lot of enemies. People who wanted something--I remember a very rich man in San Diego, Harry Farb. You'll run across the name because he was Brown's closest--I guess his campaign manager in San Diego. Very close to Jerry Brown [Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.].

Chall: Oh this is Jerry Brown?

Sankary: Yes, he is very close to Jerry Brown even now, even though he's an old man. But at that time, and he was very wealthy, he wanted me to allow him to tell me who the appointments would be on the central committee [Democratic State Central Committee]. He would back my campaign. I said no. I never got a penny. For years he and I never spoke to each other. In that little town it seemed I had made all these enemies just being stupid I guess. But maybe it's inevitable. Recently in talking with him I said, "I'm afraid about--whatever it was. He retorted, "You're not afraid of anything!"

Chall: You didn't even know what the central committee was at the time?

Sankary: No, but I wasn't going to let him dictate just because he put up some money.

Chall: So you lost that?

Sankary: Yes, I lost that, too. Then I remember a woman and her husband came and said that they wanted to write my speeches. Well, fine. I needed all the help I could get. But the stupid speeches that she wrote I wouldn't give because it was all using feminine wiles, "poor little me (a woman)." I never could use that kind of thing at all. I wouldn't use her speeches, so I offended her. It's not that I wasn't gentle enough either. The things they said about me! They'd come and say it to my sister and friends; run me down. Oh, I used to feel very bad about what people said about me. I am outgrowing that a little, at last. And I find that I made a lot of friends and admirers also. I am frequently meeting strangers who remember me very clearly twenty-two years later!

Chall: But this was the primary you're talking about?

Sankary: Yes, the very first one.

Chall: Now you didn't have any opposition?

Sankary: Yes, there were a lot of--

Chall: A lot of Democrats?

Sankary: Yes, a lot of them ran. At first there were about seven Democrats running. They dropped out along the way. Only [John] Coker persisted into the primary. But I just got out and worked. I rang doorbells, I walked, oh my God, I walked eight hours a day for months, every day. I was practicing law real hard then, too, trying to keep up an income.

Sankary: I don't know how I did it, because when I got elected my husband hired another attorney who had been practicing law--he wasn't completely new at law. He stayed less than three months I think because he lost fifteen pounds just doing my law practice. I said, "What if you'd been in a campaign and having a baby at the same time!"

I really managed a lot of work. However, in the nine months working as hard as I did in law and in the campaign and carrying the baby I lost fifteen pounds too. And the baby at birth weighed nine pounds.

Chall: This just fascinates me. You carried on a sort of traditional type of campaign. Did your husband help you with your organization?

Sankary: No, he was too busy. He didn't help me at all. And I had to carry my law practice--I just had to go to court and do all the usual things. Then I found out I was pregnant and I nearly died because I was so embarrassed. I didn't want anyone to know. It didn't show, really show for about six months. I never told anybody that first six months [laughing]. The baby was born in November and it was in June that I left. [Laughs] I made the announcement to the press. Then we went to Niagara Falls before it broke. There everybody was looking at me. I seemed to be pregnant and on my honeymoon. But I didn't have the courage to come home for about a month to this big furor: "Mrs. Sankary is pregnant." [Laughter]

Chall: You had won the primary?

Sankary: I had won the primary, yes.

Chall: Then you announced that you were pregnant?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: How did you feel about winning the primary against all these odds?

Sankary: Oh, I just expected to. I didn't expect not to win the general election either. It was the biggest surprise of my life that it was so close, and that the baby was coming that afternoon. He put me in the hospital, the doctor, and he said, "You're so tired; you just rest." I don't think he'll come for a couple weeks but I want you to rest." So he put me in the hospital and the baby was born that night.

Chall: You mean that election night?

Sankary: No, November 3. Election night I was home, up all night listening to returns. The next noon I went into hospital. Returns were still coming in all afternoon. I went under and delivered at 9 p.m., not

# Citizen-News

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1954



United Press telephoto

## HER CONSTITUENTS ALREADY INCREASED BY ONE

Mrs. Wanda Sankary, elected last Tuesday to the State Assembly from San Diego, smiles at her first child, an 8-pound 5-ounce boy born Wednesday. Election was her first bid for any public office.





Wanda Sankary  
On the Campaign Trail, 1954



with Eleanor Roosevelt



with Adlai Stevenson



with the Richard Graves campaign



Sankary: knowing final results yet. They didn't have machines then--they were counting. I'd be like twenty votes ahead, then he'd be thirty votes ahead--it was so close.

Chall: Who was your opponent?

Sankary: It was Chester Schneider who was a Republican city councilman in San Diego for many years, a very prominent Republican.

Chall: Had he been an incumbent?

Sankary: He was an incumbent city councilman at the time.

Chall: Oh, I see. But the seat was open then.

Sankary: No. The Republican incumbent in the assembly was Kathryn Niehouse, ill a lot. Remember?

Chall: Oh, yes.

Sankary: She was there but she wasn't running for reelection.

Chall: Was this her seat?

Sankary: Yes, this was her seat. Although she wasn't active in the assembly, she was still there. Of course, at the last minute she withdrew. I don't know how it happened that Chester Schneider was in there instead of running against her. Actually, I seemed to be running against her all the time. Because she was helping him. Yes, let's check that out. I think she wouldn't resign for a long time after she was sick.

Chall: Oh, so maybe this was a way to force her out. But he was in fact your opponent?

Sankary: Yes, he was on the ballot although he still retained his city council seat. He was a very prominent man, too. I was campaigning against both of them the whole time. I know she was down there just campaigning.

Chall: For him?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: And so you won?

Sankary: Yes, but it was so close that I didn't know until after the baby was born that night that I had won. I just was so surprised at the close race. I had just assumed that I was going to win. [Sankary, 28,918; Schneider, 28,481]

Chall: And then what did you do?

Sankary: The baby! I hadn't had time to get ready for that child. I didn't have any clothes for it; I didn't know how to handle a baby. And they couldn't believe I didn't know anything about a baby. You know usually you have time to work with a doctor; He teaches you things and arranges for a pediatrician and for circumcision, etc.

Chall: What did you do? Hire a housekeeper?

Sankary: Well, yes. I found a woman who was black and she was a great big 300-pounder and she was from one of the British islands in the Caribbean. Anyway, she spoke with a British accent. She had a huge vocabulary. She started helping me with this baby because she'd had ten of them of her own. But I remember how I worried about it because two months later I had to go to Sacramento and leave that baby. He was born in November and I left in January.

Chall: What was this baby's name?

Sankary: Timothy. I worried because she was always falling down and I was afraid she'd crush and kill that baby sometime. But she didn't and she was wonderful; she was just absolutely wonderful! She always said, "Let's bathe him in sound." And that's what she did from the moment that baby was born, all the time, whenever he was awake she was talking to him. Or if she had to step out of the room she'd turn on the TV so there was sound all the time. Because she did bathe him in sound; by the time he was one year old he had thirty words in his vocabulary. She really gave me the idea of developing his mentality.

Chall: She stayed with you then for quite a while?

Sankary: Yes, she did. I was up in Sacramento from January to June. Then these friends of mine from L.A. called me. He was a doctor--owned the Huntington Hospital--very wealthy people. He owned three hospitals. He said, "A beautiful baby was born here and I want to find a good home for this baby. Do you want to adopt it?" And I remember shaking like this [demonstrates] while on the phone in Sacramento. Adopt a baby! And yet I swore I was never going to get pregnant again. I had suffered such embarrassment campaigning with this big stomach! But I couldn't see raising an only child. And the way he talked about this beautiful baby and beautiful parents, I said, "Yes, I'll take the baby."

Chall: Another challenge.

Sankary: Yes. [Laughing] I think a week later I came down to L.A. and picked up the baby from the hospital and adopted it.

Chall: So your children were raised almost as twins?

Sankary: Yes, right.

Chall: Is Timothy the only child you ever had naturally?

Sankary: Yes, and I never used anything but I just never got pregnant again. We never did use any contraceptive of any kind because we wanted children. Isn't that funny?

Chall: Yes, that is.

Sankary: So I was lucky to have two.

Chall: And did they get along well, the boys?

Sankary: They did until they turned about ten. Then they broke apart. Now they're friends again--I think.

Chall: What's the younger one's name?

Sankary: Ronald. Gee, I'm getting ahead of myself. There are so many things I left out.

Cnall: Well, back up whenever you're ready.

Sankary: Where was I?

Chall: When you did win, and you had your appointments to make to the central committee, you were able to appoint one other woman and two men, weren't you?

Sankary: I think so but I don't remember who I appointed. Friends who helped me I guess in my campaign.\*

Cnall: Did you have a cadre of good friends who really worked mailing out your literature and helping?

Sankary: Yes, but there weren't more than six I'd say altogether. Just a very small handful of us. And I paid them for their time.

Chall: Can you remember who they were?

Sankary: Dorothy Conte was my most loyal helper. Then there was Sue Farris and her husband Bill. They were a young couple with a lot of little babies and they'd walk with me door to door and hand out literature. Then when I had to leave to go to the office, or do

---

\*Bebe Banks, Fred Peterson, and Leo Latimer, listed in San Diego Union, July 29, 1954.

Sankary: something else, they kept going and ringing doorbells. But I paid everybody.

Chall: You didn't pay them, did you?

Sankary: Yes, I tried to pay all of them.

Chall: Is that right? That's always considered volunteer work.

Sankary: Yes, but I asked them to do it for me. I was so glad to have someone to help me at all because there just weren't any volunteers or party organization.

Chall: Well, go ahead with the other people now. We've got three.

Sankary: Those were the main ones. I can't remember very many others. There was a man named Boas who is in the teacher's association now--I think. I can't remember his first name. He helped me, too. Other than that, these people would bring in their sisters, and their children, and family members, everybody like that. We just walked and walked and walked door to door.

Chall: You think you won on walking, on precinct walking?

Sankary: Yes. I had some little gimmicks. I bought some flower seeds and I had the packages with my picture on it. It said, "Plant this seed now for good government (which was the primary) and in the general election these will be blooming to remind you of me again." Actually people did plant them and some of them told me these zinnias grew six feet tall and really were blooming in November! I used that and a lot of leaflets. I also had a bumper sticker with a stork flying, carrying a baby. It was just a subtle touch, with no words, only my name on the sticker and in the corner this stork. I was told later when I met others in the legislature who had had a difficult campaign and were discouraged that they had used it as their inspiration. Oh, I think I had a little TV.

Oh yes! There was another fellow I must mention. His name is Bill Teawell, T-e-a-w-e-l-l. He was the owner of an advertising agency, Teawell Advertising Agency. Since then he has merged with that woman in New York. What's her name? That has that big advertising agency, the biggest one in the city of New York? [Mary Wells of Wells, Rich, and Green]

[end tape 2, side A; begin tape 2, side B]

Sankary: He lost clients, advertising clients. He offered to help me--to do my advertising for me. I think he did it without charge. I don't know why. I'll never know why. But he was just intrigued by how I was working and how I needed help. Even though he was Republican

Sankary: and everybody was critical of him he helped me. He made some TV shorts for me. Boy, without that professional help I bet I wouldn't have made it.

I hadn't seen him for many, many years. Recently, about a year ago, I ran across him in a restaurant, the first time in about twenty years. And, of course, he didn't have any teeth and his hair is gone and everything. I hardly recognized him. But we had such a warm reunion because I realized he really meant a lot to me. I didn't then; I just took all this for granted I think. But now when I look back, I don't know why he did it. Yes, you ought to interview him and ask him. Mine was the only political campaign his company had ever done.

Chall: Maybe you can ask him someday if you have another reunion. Let's see, the primary is in June and in those days the central committee met in August I believe.

Sankary: I don't know. I never went to the central committee meetings.

Chall: Do you recall anything? Did you never go to the central committee meetings?

Sankary: Never. I've never been to one. I've never been to one to this day. I've never been in politics! [Laughter] That's something else!

Chall: That has nothing to do with winning a campaign. [Laughter]

Sankary: Yes. There just was no effective Democratic organization in San Diego. They had no organization. They had no campaign money, fundraisers, volunteers, newspaper, nothing; actually people didn't get elected down there except Republicans. Oh, it's changed a lot now. They have an organization; they have campaign workers; they have money. They never had any money at all.

#### Weekends at Home with the Babies

Chall: Yes, in 1954 the Democrats were barely to be seen in California. When you lived away from home in Sacramento...?

Sankary: I went home every weekend. That was absolute torture. Oh, I just couldn't tear myself away. I cried all the way back every Sunday night on that plane.

Chall: Hard to go back to Sacramento?

Sankary: Oh, yes. I just wasn't ready; I simply wasn't ready. Leaving the baby. And increasingly as I came home, he didn't know me. He wouldn't let me hold him because I was a stranger. Oh, this was terrible. I can remember Timmy screaming when I held him. And I was just as determined, "You got to get used to it; I'm your mother." He just kept screaming. "Who's this stranger holding me?" [Ronnie was born in June.]

Chall: The legislature then met for about six months every other year. In between was a short budget session.

Sankary: Well, that year we met until June--yes it was six months. Then I went to San Diego. Then we came back I think, I don't know if there was a special session or what it was called, but I was appointed to the Transportation Committee, the Joint Senate and Assembly Committee on Highways. I had to travel around the state on that. I had to go to Sacramento for some time again about November as I recall. Then the following year there was a short session.

Then something happened, which I guess I sort of regret. But I got attached to my babies then at home. I really hated politics. And I was paid only \$500 a month and spent more than that on rent and traveling home. I really hated it. I mean I didn't mind the work in Sacramento, the committee work and the dealing with actual legislation. But I began to dislike the lobbyists--the pressures from them--and the pressures from people at home. Then the Republicans always swiping at me. You know, it was a Republican newspaper, a very conservative paper.

Chall: The San Diego Union?

Sankary: The San Diego Union and Tribune (the Copely press). They were just very rabid right, conservatives. It wasn't a fair paper; it really wasn't truthful at that time, at least. Also I had nasty phone calls and letters from people that I never had met saying all these--

Chall: This was while you were--

Sankary: In office.

Chall: The two years?



# State Assemblywoman Leads Mother's Busy Life

TRIBUNE SEP 16 1955

By BETTY PEACH

Two small boys and a house full of carpenters and painters help keep Wanda Sankary busy these days.

In between decisions on wall colors and drapery fabrics, the state assemblywoman for 79th District dashes to Los Angeles for meetings of some of the five committees on which she serves in the legislature.

The petite freshman legislator and her law-partner husband Morris Sankary are virtually camping out in the big Elizabethan home they recently purchased near State College.

## Moves Dirt

Outside, a small skip-loader groans away as it moves dirt from the side lawn where a swimming pool is being dug. In the kitchen, carpenters pound away at remodeling cabinets; the dining room, naked of furniture, is littered with plaster torn away to make room for a big picture window facing onto the gaping hole for the swimming pool; buckets of pink and lavender paint, and painters' canvas clutter the hall.

Happy gurgles of 10-month-old Timothy echo from the vaulted ceiling in the living room, stripped of furniture except for a built-in window seat overlooking the dying garden.

## Remodeling Clutter

There, serene in all the clutter of remodeling, sits the dark-eyed attorney, playing with her son.

"It's going to be just wonderful when we are finished," says Wanda, indicating the emptiness. "We just love it already. Perfect location, walking distance to kindergarten and college."

The Sankarys purchased the first house they looked at, although they had previously searched for land on which to build. The house has a paneled library, already filled with law books, downstairs. There are three fireplaces, five bedrooms, and four baths.

## Growing Family

"We need a big house for our growing family," Mrs. Sankary explained. Besides Timothy, born the day after his mother was elected to the assembly last November, the Sankarys have adopted a 3-month-old boy, Ronald Allen.

"We expect to have more children—our own, and adopted," she said.



**ELECTION BABY**—Mrs. Morris Sankary holds her 10-month-old son, Timothy, born the day after she was elected to the California state legislature.—Evening Tribune Staff Photo

Mrs. Sankary, one of three women and the only woman attorney in the legislature, strongly believes that more women should go into politics.

## Sensitive, Shy

"Women are by nature more shy and sensitive, and a political fight is rough. But women are needed in government, where their very sensitivity is an advantage at times. They are much more likely to scream about social injustices, dishonesty and unfair practices. I think they withstand pressure groups better, too."

Mrs. Sankary said the weight of work has increased tremendously since the constitution was written, and now the legis-

lature turns out as many as 6,000 bills in the 120-day limit.

She serves on five committees—finance and insurance, social welfare, industrial relations, transportation, and judi-

ciary, where she is the first woman to serve. She is the first freshman on the transportation committee.

The dynamic Mrs. Sankary plans to run for re-election next year. This time, she hopes her campaigning will be a bit easier. Last summer, she won the primary before anybody knew she was expecting a baby.

## No Doubt

"But right after the primary, I went east on business, and when I came back in three weeks, there was no doubt about it."

"During the last four weeks of the campaign, she ran into physical difficulty. She underwent surgery on both hands, and had them in casts, fingertips to elbows, until a few days before the election."

As soon as the remodeling is finished, Wanda plans to plunge into the problem of redoing the landscaping. Among hobbies, gardening is her first love, followed closely by cooking.

## Evenings at Home

"We both like to stay home evenings, and we usually listen to records and read. I'm not much on entertaining . . . mostly because I'm so busy with people all day, I like to have my evenings with my family," she explained.

During the legislative sessions, Mrs. Sankary takes a small apartment in Sacramento, and comes home each weekend. This keeps her on the go constantly, as her work in Sac-

ramento often runs well over eight hours a day.

But she likes it well enough to run for re-election. She really has only one complaint— not enough time to look after everything she is interested in.



Losing Candidate for California Assembly, 1956

- Sankary: Yes, I was too sensitive. It all bothered me terribly. I hated to tear myself away again from the family--the older these little kids were getting--the more lovable. I had gotten attached to them. So when it came time to campaign again everyone insisted that I do go for reelection. So to please them I got on that ballot. But I campaigned hardly at all. And I should just have stopped politics and held my own. But my husband and everybody said, "Well, you're going to let everybody down if you don't run again." But, for example Governor Brown backed the Republican against me, instead of a Democratic incumbent!
- Chall: He, Pat Brown? [Edmund G. Brown, Sr.]
- Sankary: Pat Brown who later was governor?
- Chall: Yes. Pat Brown didn't become governor until '58. He was the attorney general from 1950-1958. Earl Warren and Goodwin Knight were Republican governors while Pat Brown was the attorney general--the only Democrat among the Republican at the top state level.
- Sankary: It was as attorney general that he supported George Crawford who won my seat. I was so bitter about that.
- Chall: And who was [George] Crawford?
- Sankary: He was a nothing, really a nothing, either before, or after his election, or after he was appointed judge by Brown. He was a miserable judge in my opinion. For example, the putting of an old woman in jail on Christmas eve for a minor infraction. Every action and word about me was dishonest and unconscionable in his ruthless campaign. Those attracted to work in his campaign were of the same "tricky-dicky" ilk.
- Chall: Did Brown not endorse you and endorse Crawford, or did he just not endorse you?
- Sankary: No, he endorsed Crawford. He came out in newspaper articles in favor of him. I think I have those. At least this is my memory of it. I was trying to avoid all this unpleasantness. I wouldn't read the papers; I didn't cut anything out. I lost all that. I just closed myself off. I didn't want a campaign; I didn't want any more of that unpleasantness. I was so unhappy. I just didn't want to see anyone. I didn't want to read the papers so I missed a lot of news that year.
- Chall: What kind of campaign were your friends running for you this time? Did they just take it up and do it without your help?

- Sankary: Yes, they were doing it. Mostly labor tried to help me. Another thing: I felt I had always voted in favor of the colored people. I went for anything that would help the poor and the blacks. Yet they could be bought out so easy I found. They seemed to--I don't know, they didn't vote for me. At least, I would think that had they voted for me, I would have won.
- Chall: Did you campaign in the black neighborhoods and the churches?
- Sankary: I did the first time. I did little campaigning in the second time. I really didn't work like I did the first time. I probably could have gotten elected if I had....
- Chall: Yes, I think you have to campaign.
- Sankary: Yes; I didn't.
- Chall: You can't sit back. Particularly as a first term.
- Sankary: And they, the Republicans, had all the other seats in our county. So they spent \$60,000--which in those days was a lot of money--on Crawford's campaign to defeat me. That money talked and there was so much falsehood. So much that wasn't true. Oh, I can't believe people!
- Chall: Despite the fact that you weren't reading the paper, you knew that was a vicious campaign?
- Sankary: Yes, the things they were saying that weren't true. Like this: my husband had died in the service, my first husband. I remember "Mr. San Diego," the top Republican, O.W. Todd, Jr., saying in speeches over and over, "She voted against the veterans' bills." And anybody who cared to look could see that I voted always for the veteran's benefits. Why would he sell his soul as cheaply as this?
- Chall: So you were doing minimal campaigning and you were not practicing law, or were you? By that time, you didn't have much of a practice.
- Sankary: No, I wasn't practicing law.
- Chall: Were you staying at home?
- Sankary: I stayed home with the kids.
- Chall: Was your housekeeper still with you?
- Sankary: Yes, not the one I had at first. No, that one left, although we visited together. I'd moved into another house and it had stairs and she was so heavy and couldn't climb them. Actually, my poor

Sankary: husband had three women living in there when I was in Sacramento. When I came home then we never had a moment's privacy; I figured with two babies, you can't just have one woman. [Laughing] I had to make sure they were all well taken care of. So I hired all these others. They were live-in. One was a student at San Diego State, and she took care of the babies and therefore was part-time help; one would look after the house, and one would cook for them.

Chall: Your husband must have been sort of a gem to put up with that and to have allowed you to go off on a career of this kind.

Sankary: Yes, he was most unusual. In a lot of ways after I was in the second campaign, he tried to help me. Then he took the time to try and help me. But I really didn't want it and I was just being an ostrich.

Chall: Was he aware of how torn you were about what you really preferred?

Sankary: Oh, yes, yes.

Chall: That you actually did want to be--I don't know whether you wanted to be a full-time mother--but you wanted to be at home?

Sankary: And I didn't want all the difficulty, the painful things they were saying about me. There was no way to combat it, because it took so much money and for something I really didn't want.

The Copely newspapers were against me. There was no way to get a decent article in the paper--in favor. They just wouldn't cooperate with anything. Anything good I did in Sacramento was blacked out in San Diego. The L.A. papers, the other papers in the state would have a picture of Mrs. Sankary, who had introduced such and such a bill. In San Diego--not a word. That whole time I was in Sacramento they just blacked me out. They were really rotten. And if they could find anything bad, and always if anyone's had anything to say about me that was detrimental, that would be splashed all over--blown up.

Chall: Deliberate?

Sankary: Yes, they're very rotten.

### Dedicated Mother

Chall: When you decided that you really didn't want to go back, what had you in mind? That you would stay at home and also practice law? You intended to go back to your practice?



Same letter to Mr. Eugene Williams, Evening Tribune

March 26, 1955

Mr. Richard Pourade  
City Editor  
San Diego Union  
San Diego, California

Dear Mr. Pourade:

I am writing to you concerning two matters.

The first one relates to an article that has appeared about a stand I took on a bill in the State Assembly which would change the community property laws. I feel that a statement from me should be printed in explanation of any stand, as follows:

"I feel that until there is a court determination that the abandonment or desertion by a wife of her husband is unjustifiable, The green light signal should not be given to the husband to disburse community property funds."

"There are approximately seven million women in California and I feel that as one of the three women legislators I should be concerned with the welfare of women."

The second matter I am writing about concerns several pictures that were taken of me by the Associated Press with Mr. Durkes, Mr. Speers of the State Highway Commission, Mr. Klaus of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce at Sacramento which were forwarded to you along with a story. These pictures never appeared in the paper and it is hard for me to understand why something that appears so newsworthy to the Associated Press people in Sacramento seldom gets the same attention in San Diego.

I want to thank you very much for what cooperation you have given me and will appreciate anything you do in the future.

If there are any particular issues concerning San Diego County that you are interested in forward your opinion on and I will give the matter my fullest attention.

I may also say that I had a meeting by appointment with Mr. Ed Wallace, the State Highway Engineer and I am getting data and information to present to the State Highway Commission on April 21, in my continued fight to have the improvement of Highway 80 come about at long last.

Very truly yours,

Wanda Sankary

Sankary: Yes. But especially I felt that I wanted to raise those children myself rather than have someone else raising them. I wanted to create extraordinary men out of the boys. With one I succeeded and the other one, part-way. I think Timmy is really I'd say a most extraordinary man. He is a fantastic human being. This was by design.

Chall: Timmy's your first, the first born?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: And he's now?

Sankary: He's twenty-two and he's in med school in San Francisco. But he just happened to have a very good brain, a genius brain. I gave him all the exposure that anyone ever had. Every year for how many years, I think for eleven years, when he was six years old I started this: Every summer we spent in a foreign country; he's been all over the world many times.

Chall: You and he, and your husband, and your other child?

Sankary: Yes, the first few years my husband came along, but the two boys and I always went abroad, for eleven years. Then in the teen years they didn't travel with me anymore. Timmy travels all the time. Last February a year ago, he had a reservation to go to South America to "Carnival at Rio." He'd been thinking about that for a long time. He arranged his school schedule and so forth. The night that I was helping him pack--the night before he left, I got so excited that I left on the plane the next day with him [laughing]. Unprepared, completely--I didn't have the right clothes or anything!

Chall: Did you have a good time?

Sankary: I stayed in South America one month with him and he stayed another two months alone, altogether three months. He just travels in depth. I couldn't stand more than a month. It's really rough in those countries that are so poor. Very, very hard traveling. I got so tired I had to come home. But he's just a great traveler.

In addition, I gave him every kind--both of them--of lesson that existed. I started out with horseback riding. And they had a little French--conversational French in pre-school classes where they learned to sing in French and use some French words. Every thing--you can't name anything they didn't have--judo, piano, guitar, organ, swimming, golf, sailing, snow skiing, water skiing, sax, clarinet, dancing, everything.

Chall: They didn't feel pressured?



Sankary: I suppose they did; I suppose they felt that they should be playing more than taking all of these lessons. But those kids were exposed to every kind of interest and broadening influence I could think of.

Chall: You started to travel when they were how old?

Sankary: Six.

Chall: Six, so that was really almost before all the charter flights.

Sankary: Yes, it cost a fortune. I remember our first trip to Europe we had to borrow the money. It was \$8,000. This again shows how wonderful my husband was to go along with all of this stuff.

I was going to concentrate on achievement and developing of their minds. So I gave them all kinds of lessons. They both played the piano like concert pianists by the time they were fourteen. Unfortunately, I guess I pushed too hard because neither one of them plays the piano now. But in the five years--they started when they were about nine I guess, and they took about five years of lessons. I spent two hours a day, one hour with each child. I'd sit there and watch them practice. And make sure they practiced the way the teacher wanted them to.

If I had spent two hours at the piano myself, I'd be enjoying the piano now! I don't play. [Laughter] I'd drive them to their golf lessons or whatever; I'd sit in the car for hours. I really concentrated on those boys in every possible field. Such dedication and devotion!

Chall: How were you practicing law at the same time?

Sankary: No, I didn't then until they started kindergarten. Then I'd go half-days. I always was home before they, at three o'clock. All through their schooling I always was home by three.

This one kid Timmy turns out to have a real brain, being very bookish and intellectual. But he's also well-rounded and a charming, witty conversationalist. He has taken the trouble of thanking me, saying, "Gee, you've just given me every kind of lesson there was." He can compare himself now to other people. They could do the five strokes in swimming when about seven. Tim excelled in everything. He was admitted to about every med school in the country. Duke University that chooses only three college grads per year for their special six year medical-legal program, chose my Timmy as one of the three in the country. However, he couldn't see himself living in that small, quiet town. All through his college training he indulged in fantastic outside activities. He was given during his three years at UCSD a lab at Salk Institute for a special cryogenics experiment he was working on. He flew into Mexican villages working

Sankary: with the Flying Samaritans (a group of doctors taking turns flying in with a tiny mono-plane). His accomplishments are too numerous to mention here. He deserves a book of his own, already.

Chall: Sophisticated, I suppose.

Sankary: Very. He's very interesting. I wish you could meet him. I hope you do.

Chall: I will perhaps someday. What about the second boy, the younger one?

Sankary: Well, now Ronnie--the thing that happened with Ronnie, and I feel very bad about it--I made some mistakes. I didn't realize that Tim would so overshadow him and everyone else his age. You know, nobody can compete with Timmy in books and intellectual things. So Ronnie began to feel that he wasn't as good. He doesn't have the self-esteem or the confidence. He doesn't think that he's as good. And yet he is as good and better than Tim in many many ways. There were things Ron could do well that Tim couldn't. In sports for example no one we knew, even older children, could hold a candle to Ron in any sport. While in grammar school he could catch a football on the run being thrown to him by an adult at a long long distance, just incredibly. His golf teacher made a special excursion to tell me he's the greatest golf student he'd had in years! Ron was about eight. He just raved and raved. As a tiny crawling baby he'd push himself into the swimming pool, sink, be dragged out, screaming and kicking to repeat it until he could swim and stay on top--he was still a baby under eighteen months!

Also as a baby he was far more innovative than others. At one, he rolled up a newspaper and shoved it through a small hole in the dryer to the pilot light at the back and got himself a flaming torch. Somehow when he was about one he opened a new, unopened green paint can and painted the bed and mattress. He could always handle the TV knobs to get the best reception when none of us could; and he loved to combine a few broken toys to invent one good new one that operated.

But most of all, Ronnie has the personality, showing consideration for others, as no one else I know. His is a natural social grace, evident since infancy: more kind, more affectionate, and more loving than others, and too sensitive.

At this time he isn't in college or doing anything special. I hope he finds himself yet. But it's psychological with him. He feels, "Tim is doing so much and I can't compete and so I'm not even going to try." I imagine that's what happens.

Chall: That's a real problem because if they were both taking lessons, and the same lessons at the same time, and one was excelling all the time....

Sankary: No, they were equal at lessons I took them to. But intellectual achievement was all too much. He wasn't ready to study and books. Our schools aren't geared for all kinds of children. A failure there is damaging.

Chall: One never knows all that at the time.

Sankary: No.

Chall: It's like raising twins. And they weren't twins so they would be different.

Sankary: Yes. And different talents. So not having had children before, I say now to my psychologist, "Why in the world didn't I seek some advice?" I went to the school counselors but they weren't even psychologists. He says because in those days there really wasn't anyone advising you about things like this.

Chall: And you may not have sought advice because you felt you had always done something on your own and succeeded.

Sankary: Succeeded. And yet he's got so many talents that were developed. If he ever catches on, where he wants to do something, where he gets a drive he'll set the world on fire. That's Ronnie.

Chall: Is he working?

Sankary: He works at various things. He's a very good cook. So he can always get a job in a restaurant, for instance. He paints houses very well. He does everything very well. His employers always like him. In fact, he says he's going to go back to the piano. Tim says, "I'll never play it again. I don't care about it. I'm moving on to other things." But Ronnie says he'll go back to piano. And oh, he was the best! The teacher said that he would play things better or as well as any concert pianist; he was just eleven or twelve.

Chall: Does he like music?

Sankary: Yes, he plays the guitar. That he got on his own without any pressures from me. He learned to play it very well.

Chall: He's only about twenty-one?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: He still needs a little time.

Sankary: And he always was a little immature it seemed to me, because Tim was a serious forty year old at eight. He never was as mature as Timmy. He was a playful, exploring, daring, devilish child. So I think that may make a difference. Also he's rather small. He feels-- he's shy about being small.

Chall: How small?

Sankary: He's no taller than I and small-boned. And Tim is very tall.

Chall: That's not so terribly small.

Sankary: No, but compared to Timmy he always felt unhappy about height.

Chall: Yes, his brother; it would be hard.

Sankary: Yes, psychologically. I didn't realize what was happening to him, that he was becoming depressed.

Chall: Well, he'll probably come along.

Sankary: I hope so.

Chall: If he's bright and intelligent.

Sankary: He is that. He learns fast, has a prodigious memory and had a vocabulary of a ten year old when he was five. Are you getting tired?

Chall: Not terribly, but we'll stop when we finish this tape, in just a few minutes.

[end tape 2, side B]

[The following was added by Wanda Sankary when she reviewed the transcript.]

Sankary: Besides raising children, and practicing law, my life with Morrie was very full and rich.

Dancing is my first love (I had won the Great Waltz competition as a teenager), and Morrie learned to dance exceptionally well. We had a very active social life: playing bridge, sailing; we went to symphonies, and operas, and ballets, and plays, sometimes driving the 130 miles to L.A. and back in one evening for special things like the Moiseyev Dancers or a ballet. We went to Shakespeare at the Old Globe, Laguna Arts Pageant of the Masters. Morrie dragged me to too many art shows being a talented artist himself. This all began when we were at a Realists exhibit and he told me to pick one to buy. I picked one of a grey vase on a table. When he looked closely at the price and saw it was \$5,000, he said, "Hell, I'll paint you one myself!" So he signed up for a class listed as "landscapes," but the first night in it he discovered it was instead a life class! As the nude sat down on the stage in front of him, he got so rattled he could hardly paint. Yet I have that first picture, and it's good.

Sankary: We spent wild nights bouncing on the dark desert in a dune buggy (with 10,000 others out there increasing the hazards); went to many seances and meetings with mediums; went to black tie splendid private dinners with Old La Jollans ostentatiously displaying their wealth, outdoing each other.

We took trips without the children to many obscure countries and places on some wild deal or scheme some client had brought in. There were constant exciting deals which made our practice far more interesting and varied than any other in town. He had a reputation of trying any new idea or device. And the inventors came to us. None of these "big deals" ever came through and would make a thick book. There are files on at least 200 of them. But with each one, there was the fun, the excitement, the anticipation, and the dream of becoming billionaires. Morrie has an international practice because of the deals taking him into nearly every country of the world. Most of the time he went alone, staying away as long as two months.

One time I had invited seventy-five guests for his birthday party. Unfortunately he had to be in Milan, Italy. He called home that night and after he spoke with everyone who wanted to talk to him, his bill was astronomical. The next time he called home during a party, he was only as far away as Houston. When I asked, "Do you want to say hello to them?" he quickly said, "No!" and hung up.

We had lots of money and he showered me with jewels and clothes. Once when I came back from Europe he had a little red Lotus Europa sports car in the garage for me. You had to be a contortionist to get into it. But it did create a lot of attention. When it stopped for me one day on the freeway, and I learned I couldn't get parts for it in America, I left it there and never saw it again. It got towed away. I had driven it only three times. Some would say I was extravagant or spoiled, but what money I threw away was a fraction of what his dissipation of it was.

There were trips to New York seeing all of the theater we could squeeze in; a trip to Washington D.C. to be admitted before the U.S. Supreme Court together; a trip to Cape Kennedy to watch the launching of Apollo X about 1965. This was certainly one of the greatest thrills of my life: the intense heat, the shaking earth, the roar, the awesomeness of that monstrous rocket weighing thousands of tons nearly as tall as the Empire State Building, slowly lifting off and going into the vastness. In it were three astronaut friends with whom we had spent the night before in their quarantined quarters, one of whom I later met in 1975 in Kiev where I had a private breakfast with him and the Cosmonauts after the Apollo-Soyez link-up, when our travels crossed accidentally.

We had other marvelous trips together, without our children: to Mexico City and Acapulco on our honeymoon; Waikiki before it was discovered, when the birds and the breeze and the Moana Royal Hawaiian

Sankary: were the only things there; to Belize, British Honduras; through Central America; to Germany with a chauffeured limo all ours; to Washington D.C. for the Johnson inauguration. I was so overcome by the president's face close to mine while he held my hand that when he asked my name I completely forgot what it was.

We had memorable trips as a family too--Europe, Asia, and Canada when my jaws were bulging with mumps; magnificent, unbelievable Victoria Falls and Uganda in Africa; and the Matterhorn in the moonlight; mixed-sex swims in Japanese pools and one unanticipated midnight landing on the very airstrip where twenty-nine years earlier my pilot husband, Allen, had crashed in Nandi, Fiji Islands. The terminal was then his BOQ, and the garden behind it was where he was buried. This was an unexpected emotional visit with my past.

Besides trips, our life together seems in retrospect extraordinary in many ways. At least our combination seemed to create a richness and excitement of existence by which other lives pale. Those were the halcyon days. And I know that there is a special feeling between us in a part of our hearts that no one can destroy, and memories, priceless treasures, that will never be taken away from us.

## III EXPERIENCES AS A LEGISLATOR, 1954-1956

[Interview 2: December 12, 1977]

[begin tape 3, side A]

First Days: The Heated Campaign for Assembly Speaker

Chall: Let me ask you first today, your recollections of going to Sacramento and organizing your office and staff--because that would have been an interesting start to your career.

Sankary: After I was elected the first thing I became aware of was strangers contacting me with a sales pitch--either for Smith [H.Allen] or for Lincoln [Luther]--neither of whom I had met--both of whom were Republicans. I really didn't see the tremendous importance of whichever one got elected [as Speaker]. I would have been for neither one.

The greatest help I had had in my campaign, I guess, was from the labor organizations. Mr. Frank Luckel, who was also a stranger to me--a Republican, and a San Diegan, and a very kind man--when he came to me, as did the labor leaders separately, urging Lincoln to be supported because he supposedly was a moderate, and a decent, and an honest person--this appealed to me. Also the fact that I was gaining some real respect for Mr. Luckel. I sensed that he would be a friend and I was certainly right. I became very close to him all through the legislative term. Long after I was defeated we kept up a correspondence and were close. I loved him very much.

He and those who were for Lincoln induced me to make a commitment. There was a Mr. [William] Munnell who later became quite a powerhouse in the assembly--who also came down to San Diego and spoke for Mr. Lincoln.

Chall: Those people came to you in San Diego before you had even gone up to the legislature in Sacramento?

Sankary: Immediately. Oh, yes, immediately after the election. Just within days. I didn't have a chance to recover at all and I was inundated. So I made the commitment feeling secure in that Lincoln was spoken of so highly and Smith not quite as highly.

Then the other side started on me--including Mr. [Sheridan] Hegland whom I had considered a good friend and whom I still consider a good friend. But at the time I was elected I was too naive to realize that his policies and politics were on opposite poles from mine. We never agreed on anything politically. He was really a conservative and it may be that his district demanded that. I don't know.

Chall: He was a freshman legislator too.

Sankary: At the same time. We were both put on the cover of San Diego Magazine together, then called "Point," [chuckles] and so we were supposedly very close but as it turned out we were very far apart. He and [Jack] Schrade were always on the opposite sides of Mr. Luckel and myself. I drove to Sacramento on my first trip up there with all my clothes--alone--and arrived there at about 11:00 at night. I just got into the hotel when the phone rang, which it continued to do, until three or four in the morning with people insisting on coming to talk to me to try to change my vote, my commitment to--

Chall: They knew that you had committed yourself to Lincoln by then?

Sankary: And all that time I had never talked to Mr. Lincoln at all. I never met him. So I stayed firm because in the first place I'm not the kind that wavers. I made up my mind and I felt secure in it. I didn't get any sleep and early in the morning I had a very early appointment with someone--several actually. Someone took me to breakfast early and through that whole meal, gave me the pitch of why I must change. I just kept my ground. I think that the Chamber of Commerce representative was one of the toughest.

Then I recall people telling me later in the legislature--strangers that I didn't know--were sitting in the restaurant listening to this going on without my realizing it. They told me later that that was their first impression of me and they were most impressed. Even though they were for Smith, they didn't realize they were getting someone as strong as I when I was elected. They thought of me as a little mother with a newborn baby and that I was a wishy-washy, easy-going thing that could be pushed one way or the other. This really changed their minds.

Then Mr. Lincoln got his appointment and had a little reception. I went and sort of got acquainted. I think that was the first night with the legislators. I never met the women at all. [Pauline Davis, Dorothy Donahoe] I don't know how they voted. I don't recall them



# point

Independent San Diego Newsweekly

January 13, 1955

**Two Demos  
From S. D.**

*—Page 6*

**Hotel del's  
Great Chef**

*—Page 8*

**Peace,  
Says FRA**

*—Page 10*

—Bob Pouline Photo



# Two S. D. Democrats: New Laws Coming

**W**HEN the gavel signals the opening session of the Legislature in Sacramento this week the San Diego County delegation—for the first time in 12 years—will include two Democrats.

How they got there, and why is old news now. But last Nov. 2 the electorate in two assembly districts did break through the elephant hide curtain. They elected attorney Wanda Sankary in the 79th District, and businessman Sheridan Hegland in the 77th.

That being the case, what may San Diego County expect from its neophyte Democrats laboring in a vineyard so long strictly Republican? How will their votes, their committee work, the legislation they introduce and their speeches differ from the G.O.P. stalwarts they succeeded? What sort of individuals are they? And how will San Diego County like the change, if any?

**POINT** set out last week to find the answers to these questions by probing the freshmen assemblymen themselves on the eve of their departure for Sacramento (see cover).

A discussion of legislation in the labor field brought indications that both Assemblyman Hegland and Assemblywoman Sankary want to see laws which will benefit the lowest paid groups and which tend to foster fair dealing both for labor and management. There will be opposition to "union busting" legislation.

In this respect S. D. can expect a sharp contrast between Hegland and his predecessor, who favored the extreme right wing brand of Republicanism. Not so in the case of the 79th District. Mrs. Sankary's stand on legislation may turn out to be not too different from that of her predecessor, Katherine Nichouse, who tended to a liberal brand of Republicanism.

**MRS. SANKARY** who shares a San Diego law office with her attorney-husband, gave birth to a baby boy the day after her election to the State

Assembly. The Sankary baby, almost as controversial as actress Helen Hayes' famous "act of God" offspring, was a peg upon which his mama's opposition hung many a campaign pitch. It stood to reason—to hear them tell it—that, either mother Wanda would neglect the Assembly or Assemblywoman Sankary would neglect the baby.

Unperturbed, mother and child gained national notice via a post-election photograph in Life Magazine and Mrs. Sankary informed the press her own career-girl mother has reared six children. Her husband's career-girl mother reared nine. Both attorneys "turned out well" as they say back in Keokuk.

**THERE** is no hesitation by Mrs. Sankary as to her first official act in Sacramento. "On the first day," she says, "I'll submit a resolution to commend Mrs. Nichouse on her long, active career in the assembly and for her good works in behalf of San Diego."

Mrs. Sankary says she doesn't have harbors or industry in the 79th District, but she does have State College and is desirous of giving State "the greatest expansion it has ever had in the history of the district."

Assemblywoman Sankary refuses to buy the anti-state-colleges argument that these government institutions should be held down to 5,000 enrollments.

Education, she thinks, can be achieved more cheaply in greater concentration. UCLA, she points out, has a tremendous campus population and few question that its facilities are superb.

"It's hard enough to obtain sufficient school space as it is," says Mrs. Sankary, "without attempting to create new campuses for every 5,000 students. Besides, the larger the school, the more it has to offer. The argument that small schools offer more opportunity for participation is not entirely valid when you realize that these youngsters are being trained to take their places



**Wanda Sankary**

in a competitive world. They will not be making their way in neat little towns carefully held down to a population of 5,000, or 50,000, or what have you.

"For San Diego State College, I want to see more land, more buildings, more students and more emphasis on industrial engineering. We should endeavor to pinpoint student training toward the needs of this aircraft industry town."

**MRS. SANKARY** would like to see legislation introduced which will tax land that is at this point sitting around

unimproved. Tax it, she says, according to its rental value. "A valuable lot, to make up an example, at Fifth and Broadway, should be a terrific source of revenue, whether it has a building on it or not. People holding on to speculative land should not be permitted to do so at the expense of the rest of us."

Mrs. Sankary is going to take an active part in encouraging old age pensions, creating child care centers (State subsidized) and the construction of enough schools to eliminate delinquency breeding half-day sessions.

She wants to see an investigation of unemployment compensation.

"Some people say that a fraction of one per cent put in false claims for compensation," says Mrs. Sankary. "Others who are anti-compensation say that 25 per cent put in false claims. It is hard for me, personally, to believe that a quarter of all the working people are crooks. I think we should run this down for the good of all."

Democratic Assemblywoman Sankary will plug for a good cheap source of water for San Diego. She thinks the Feather River plan being considered now represents fantastic expense. "We pay \$8 to \$10 an acre-foot for Colorado River water," she points out. The Feather River deal (bringing water down from Tehachapi Mountain) would cost \$50 an acre-foot. I believe we should study the possibilities of converting sea water."

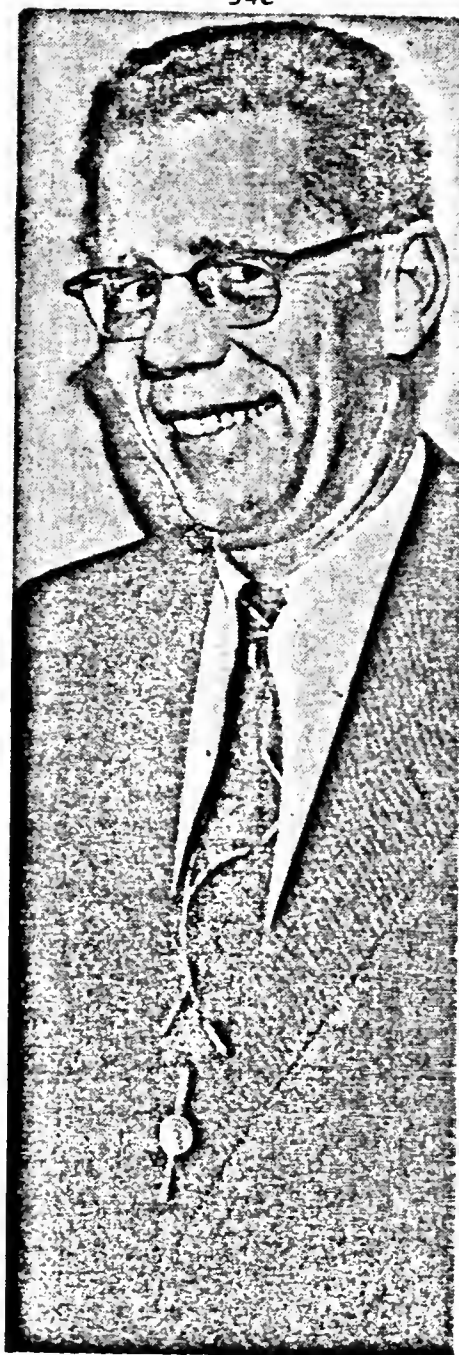
Mrs. Sankary will seek seats on education, social welfare, and government organization committees. Her profession will make a spot on the judiciary committee automatic.

**ASSEMBLYMAN** Sheridan Hegland is well known locally as a former newspaperman (ex-owner-publisher of the La Mesa News and pictorial) and middle-of-the-road Democrat. He represents the 77th District, which he describes as "suburban and rural."

"Therefore, one of my vital concerns is a more equitable distribution of the costs of school construction."

Hegland feels that in this regard predominantly residential areas lacking stories and/or community wealth, are overly burdened assessment-wise.

Though school operational expenses are shared—California paying 45 per



**Sheridan Hegland**

cent, taxpayers 55—Hegland thinks it "manifestly unfair" that property owners in districts like his pay a great deal more than in Los Angeles and San Francisco, for instance, where there is "tremendous assessed value behind each youngster."

Therefore Sheridan Hegland will co-sponsor a bill predicated on splitting school construction costs between state and local levels.

HEGLAND'S "top interest" for San Diego County, however, is the creation of what he calls "highways of the ocean" from Canada to Mexico. These

will consist of small boat recreational harbors in the Oceanside and Carlsbad area on the northern San Diego County coast, and at National City and Chula Vista, on San Diego Bay.

For the boat-drivers who hover about in inland waters, Hegland wants the marine highways financed by either outright grants from impounded tidelands oil money or via 100 year loans from that fund to the commission. Gas taxes finance operations of this nature at the present time.

Hegland also wants Highway 80 improved and a "Del Mar Bypass" built from Highway 101 somewhere north of Solana Beach and several miles east of the race track, to proceed southward through Murphy Canyon.

**AT LEAST** three bills will be introduced by Mr. Hegland. One in behalf of the Vista Chamber of Commerce, will propose a vote on creation of a "Palomar County," by splitting San Diego County.

Hegland says he will fight hard to put over the point that democracy holds for north county people. If the majority of the people up there sign a petition to secede—he will back them one hundred per cent.

"I have no opinion one way or the other," Hegland says, "I live in south county. But—with the boundary at Camp Miramar—I will help the citizens of Del Mar, Fallbrook, Encinitas, Vista, Oceanside, Carlsbad, Escondido, Ramona—to elect their own officials and govern themselves—if that's the way most of them want it."

Pondering one state agency which met behind locked doors and held up the minutes of its meeting for 11 days, Hegland says he will introduce a second bill forbidding state boards, commissions, and Senate and Assembly committees from meeting secretly.

He will also plug for legislation cancelling pensions for state employees or legislators convicted of a felony if the crime arises out of official responsibilities.

In conclusion Hegland emphasizes, "I will never vote to support a deficit budget (presently going in the red \$10,000,000 a month. California for the fiscal year is expected to achieve a total deficit of \$120,000,000). Taxes are already too high."



Sankary: there that night but that was my first contact with many of the other legislators. Of course, Schrade and Hegland, whom I knew, were not there. So I was a stranger among them all, and Mr. Lincoln was very nice. I was even more impressed after I met him. He said, "Thank you" very graciously without being gushy or proud. But then, when it came time--and I never asked for a committee--he put me on more committees than any other freshman legislator in history they said. [Laughs]

I got a lot of flak from the newspapers and everyone for voting for Mr. Lincoln. He was against the lobbyists' control pretty much. He was a very upstanding man I found out afterwards. Then, in addition, even though he was the so-called northerner [northern California], he appointed 235 southerners to the committees and only 169 northerners.\* Not only that, people who voted against him, like Schrade and Hegland, admit they got every committee they asked for and more than they would have gotten if Smith had been elected instead. It shows what a good decision I made. [Laughs]

Chall: It was quite a group of committee assignments you received.\*\*

Sankary: Yes, I didn't ask for any of them that I recall. But he just kept putting me on one committee after another, and people were so amazed because it hadn't been done. I hadn't even thought about committees. But I found that was a mixed blessing because I worked until about two o'clock in the morning every night. Committee hearings were at night. They started at three o'clock in the afternoon and you were in session all day and then committee hearings until midnight--every night because I had so many committees. Every night.

Chall: Did the men work as hard on the committees as you did?

Sankary: Yes, but I don't know another person that had as many or more committees than I was on. So at first blush in the legislature--being a newcomer--this was extremely hard. Not being familiar with the routine at all.

We were assigned offices and secretaries. I got a very sweet young girl and I felt that someone was really thinking kindly toward me to give me her. Whoever chose her for me felt that she was right for me.

Chall: She'd had enough experience so she could help you?

---

\*Total of all committee appointments. Each person can be counted several times--once for each of his committees. W.S.

\*\* Social Welfare, Finance and Insurance, Industrial Relations, Transportation and Commerce, Judiciary.





MUNNELL  
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN  
1001 ATLANTIC BLVD.  
LOS ANGELES 22

COMMITTEE MEMBERS  
(LEE) BACKSTRAND  
WALD D. DOYLE  
ALST R. GEDDES  
J. MCFALL

55a

MARIAN KOBER  
COMMITTEE  
SECRETARY

# California Legislature

## Assembly Interim Committee

### Finance and Insurance

#### SUBCOMMITTEE ON UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION

May 7, 1956

Hon. Wanda Sankary  
Assemblywoman  
312 Bank of America Bldg.  
San Diego 1, California

Dear Wanda:

This will inform you that I have today appointed you to the Subcommittee on Unemployment Insurance and Workmen's Compensation which is currently investigating youth employment opportunities.

You have been selected to serve on this subcommittee because of your interest in youth problems and youth activities. I know that you will make an excellent contribution toward the accomplishments of this subcommittee, particularly in solving the problems of youth employment in our State.

Sincerely yours,

*Bill Munnell*  
WM. A. MUNNELL

Sankary: Yes and she was helpful, and sincere, and trustworthy, and really nice.

Chall: In those days all you got is one?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: You didn't have an administrative assistant or anything like that?

Sankary: No and we shared an office. I shared it with Mr. [Ralph M.] Brown, from Modesto I think. We had to share an office.

Chall: Was that because you were Democrats?

Sankary: I don't know. I think they just didn't have enough. Actually we were sharing a reception room with a little cubbyhole for us.

Throughout, neither of the other two women came to see me that I recall or made any overtures. Whenever we were thrown together, when a photographer would ask us to pose together, it was such a novelty to me because I just didn't know those women at all.

Chall: Yet the three of you were Democrats.

Sankary: Yes, we were Democrats but we never associated and they somehow didn't approach me. They were busy. They were both very hard-working women--very hard working--and established.

Chall: Each of them had been in one term.

Sankary: Before that?

Chall: Yes, just one I think.

Sankary: Well, they seemed to know what they were doing and I felt that I was fumbling around a little.

Chall: I think both of them had more experience with the legislature prior to their becoming elected anyway than you had had.

Sankary: Yes, because I knew nothing about politics or the legislature at all. I never knew anything!

Chall: You must have had to learn under fire when you got there.

Sankary: Oh, did I ever. I learned about issues. Anything I said in my campaign I educated myself about, but I had definite liberal, progressive views to apply to each one as it presented itself to me. I had a basic philosophy, but not too many facts when I started.



Chall: I do have campaign material that indicates that you were right on top of issues--at least you stated them.

Making Decisions: Favors and Pressures

Chall: If during your campaign you would turn down somebody who said he would help you if you would allow him to make an appointment when you got to the legislature, the pressures on you to do certain things and to vote certain ways, in order to get a vote for what you wanted--that must have been something to cope with. Do you want to talk about that now or at another time?

Sankary: I might as well.

Chall: All right, how did that feel to you?

Sankary: When I got letters for something I didn't agree with I wrote back and honestly said I just didn't see it that way. Oh, I got some very nasty letters and telephone calls all through. The experience was sometimes really painful.

Chall: These were your constituents?

Sankary: Yes. Then Senator [Fred H.] Kraft who was a very tough character, and well entrenched at the time, said--and I heard him say this in many speeches--"If you don't support me in the campaign don't come and ask me for anything." And he told me to act that way and I gradually tried to learn to say this to somebody: "Where were you when I needed you in my campaign? I don't agree with what you want and you didn't help me. Why should I help you?" But I didn't do it more than once or twice.

Chall: Did anybody advise you when you got in that the most important thing to remember was that you wanted to get reelected?

Sankary: Nobody told me that so I did everything wrong as far as getting reelected. The main fight that came along was a bill sponsored by the medical society that would have prevented low cost prepaid medical care, like the Kaiser Plan. I knew nothing about the Kaiser Plan but the thing that struck me wrong, again [chuckles], was that it wouldn't allow people to have this advantage with their medical bills. It came before the Judiciary Committee and the whole darn committee--before the committee met--was being lobbied by these medical men and they had it solid. Everybody on that committee seemed to say, "Let's give it to them" because apparently, without saying it to me, they were getting campaign support.



## CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a fast message.  
unless its deferred char-  
acter is indicated by the  
proper symbol.

# WESTERN UNION

## TELEGRAM

W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

1201

## SYMBOLS

DL=Day Letter

NL=Night Letter

LT=International  
Letter Telegram

The filing time shown in the date line on domestic telegrams is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

50A434

O-SDA686 NL PD=SAN DIEGO CALIF 12

ASSEMBLY WOMAN WANDA SANKARY

1955 MAR 12 PM 5 28

STATE CAPITOL SACRAMENTO CALIF

FIFTY OF MY EMPLOYEES AND TWO HUNDRED SAN DIEGO  
CITIZENS SUPPORTED BY THEM URGE YOUR SUPPORT OF  
ASSEMBLY BILL NO 2292 FEELING IT GIVES THE PUBLIC THE  
ESSENTIAL PROTECTION TO WHICH THEY ARE ENTITLED

EWART W GOODWIN PERCY H GOODWIN CO

*First National Bank Bldg*

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

Sankary: So I remember going to every person (individually) on the Judiciary Committee and saying, "This is wrong and I want you to go against it and do it as a favor for me." I think this was about the first thing I ever asked of any fellow legislators. I turned that whole committee around singlehandedly and they voted it down. When I walked out of the committee that night--it must have been about midnight and I was very tired. I never knew this man from Adam but he was a lobbyist working, I think, for the California Medical Association. He came over to me and he said, "Mrs. Sankary, I hope you sleep tonight because you're not going to get reelected. I'm going to see to that." He said dreadful, other nasty things to me.

Sure enough, in the next campaign the county medical society--all the big medical firms and clinics here--sent letters to every one of their patients--every patient. I have copies of letters in which they said not to vote for me. They really put out a campaign against me because that bill didn't go through. The only reason we succeeded is because they didn't know that just before the committee meeting I did this little trick. They didn't know I was going to do it because I didn't know until then myself. So they weren't prepared for my action.

Chall: You were asking the Judiciary Committee what--to get this out onto the floor?

Sankary: No, I was asking them to kill the bill.

Chall: Oh, to kill the bill.

Sankary: The bill was to prevent any such pre-paid medical care associations from cropping up in California and we killed it dead.

Chall: It was a no-pass then.

Sankary: That's right. I didn't know I was going to do it until just before the committee meeting. I was going through the bills as we were sitting down to this committee meeting and on the spur of the moment--before the committee met--when I could still move around and talk to everyone individually, I got their attention on it.

Chall: Why, after all the pressures that had been on them for years? Why would they turn around? This was a powerful lobby.

Sankary: I know. I think that the committee members probably did it just for me, because they liked me, and I was new in the legislature, and they were just doing me a favor.

Chall: Do you think so?

REES-STEALY MEDICAL CLINIC  
2001 FOURTH AVENUE  
SAN DIEGO 1, CALIFORNIA

November 1, 1956

INTERNAL MEDICINE

CLAIR L. STEALY, M.D.  
WILLIAM C. COOKE, M.D.  
R. H. GUNDBERG, M.D.  
JOHN M. RUMSEY, M.D.  
WILLIAM J. TIGHE, M.D.  
HAROLD M. MESSENGER, M.D.  
HOMER D. PEABODY, JR., M.D.  
F. F. BERETTA, M.D.  
WOODBURY PERKINS, M.D.

ALLERGY

GEORGE F. HARSH, M.D.

SURGERY

CLARENCE E. REES, M.D.  
MAURICE J. BROWN, M.D.  
BENJAMIN WOODWARD, M.D.  
JOHN H. MEHNERT, M.D.

SURGERY & UROLOGY

JAMES A. MAY, M.D.

ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY

F. BRUCE KIMBALL, M.D.  
PHILIP H. DICKINSON, M.D.  
GEORGE J. KEATING, M.D.

OBSTETRICS & GYNECOLOGY

HERVEY K. GRAHAM, M.D.  
JOHN F. WANLESS, M.D.  
PERRY O. POWELL, JR., M.D.

NEUROLOGY

F. G. LINDEMULDER, M.D.

PEDIATRICS

G. BURCH MEHLIN, M.D.  
HAROLD WEATHERMAN, M.D.  
WILLIAM A. LEOVY, M.D.

OPHTHALMOLOGY

JOHN L. POWER, M.D.

OTOLARYNGOLOGY

CHARLES W. REES, M.D.  
JOHN W. HENRICKSON, M.D.

RADIOLOGY

J. CURTIS ASHER, M.D.

PATHOLOGY

PHILLIPS L. GAUSEWITZ, M.D.

ADMINISTRATION

JAMES H. BONE

Dear Friend:

At each session of the California Legislature many issues are decided relating to Public Health. These include: control of disease; sanitary regulations; child welfare; food inspection, etc.

We believe that George G. Crawford, candidate for the 79th District, is well qualified to represent us in this important office. Mr. Crawford was born and raised in San Diego, is a veteran of World War II and a practicing attorney. He would be an able representative of his district.

It is of utmost importance that we all actively participate in the selection of our public officials. May we respectfully urge you to vote at the election on November 6th.

*The Staff*

Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic



Sankary: I think some of them had second thoughts and thought, well, we'll go along with her. I'll never forget that man's face, the sneer on his face, when he said, "I hope you can sleep tonight, Mrs. Sankary."

Then the second thing I wanted to say--they were sort of spoiling me all during that legislative session. For example, on the opening day the senate sends three people over to the assembly, and the assembly sends three people over to the senate to say "hello" and proffer some opening greetings. It's just a little ritual that they have. They appointed me as one of the three, which was kind of a pleasant surprise. I was to go up to the front of the senate and get introduced to the whole senate the first day. So this is why I say they were sort of doing little favors for me. I felt sort of special that whole session. They were so nice to me in the legislature.

Chall: Were they treating you as a fellow legislator or pampering you as a woman? Did you feel that they were downgrading you in any way?

Sankary: Not at all. I never felt that. I think perhaps because I was a woman they gave me this special treatment, but I definitely felt I was getting special treatment. Yet in all my career in the law and in law school--when I was associating with so many men--I never used feminine wiles. I never, never felt that because I'm a woman I should have special treatment. So each time they'd do it, it came as a surprise. It always does, even now--surprise me if someone does something for me because I'm a woman.

But I want to give another example of that and I'll give you the legislation. There was big talk about seawater conversion in that year, a lot of pressure on the legislature from certain groups and a lot of letters. So the assembly got into a big discussion about it, thinking that we should try and get a seawater conversion plant in California since the federal government had announced they were going to put three, four, or five in the United States.

While this conversation was going on in the legislature--in the assembly--I proposed that it come to the city of San Diego. I know there were two or three others that requested it in their city--in San Francisco, and L.A., and I don't know where else--perhaps where they really needed water. Yet the assembly sort of--I don't know, they sort of got together and said, "Well, let's give it to Wanda and put it in San Diego." We passed a resolution and sent it to the federal government. It was again, doing it for me--not because anyone else in San Diego requested it. Schrade, Hegland, and Luckel didn't request it. And Kraft didn't request it to my knowledge. Again, I felt this was just a little favor they were doing for me. Since everyone in the California legislature wanted it built in San Diego there was a conversion plant built in San Diego.

Sankary: So I always felt that I had produced that just in my entreating [chuckles] but not as a woman again. Perhaps it had an effect, because as you know there were so many new assemblymen that year, and yet I felt I was getting all kinds of little favors.

Chall: When they gave favors like this to you, did they ask anything in return ultimately?

Sankary: Never. Nobody--

Chall: Did they say, "Look, I helped you out on this--"

Sankary: No, nobody did that that I recall at all.

Chall: So you didn't feel any pressure from the legislators. The pressures then came from lobbyists outside?

Sankary: Right.

Chall: The medical profession, of course, was one.

Sankary: When any legislator asked me for his vote and knowing--I mean, I soon established what I would vote for--social welfare and individual rights, knowing what my position was, he didn't press it. Contrary to Schrade and Hegland who were quite vocal about theirs--I was very quiet. I never said anything in that assembly. I was really intimidated about talking. In fact, I recall sitting there that first day and saying, "How did I get here?" I was so overwhelmed. I looked around and the governor was up at the rostrum speaking--I just couldn't believe it had happened to me. What was I, little me, doing here? I never overcame that feeling and yet when something came up against my convictions I was very firm. The aggression came out--"Oh, absolutely not." I'd take a stand very positively. I never was wishy-washy.

Chall: You took a stand and then you worked through the committees, is that it?

Sankary: Yes. But even in committees when legislators would approach me for a vote that I couldn't give--and I'd have to vote my conscience--I never felt their animosity, even the very, very conservative ones like Mr. [Frank] Lanterman. He and I never voted the same and yet I never felt his animosity. He would ridicule everybody and he may have done that to me behind my back. He would go like this [gestures] when he'd say "Pauline Davis" because she had a high pompadour. If it was anyone that he opposed politically he was just cruel--cutting--and he may have done that to me but only behind my back. Yet we'd have a drink together after a session or have lunch together and we got along just fine--he, even the most conservative!



Sankary: The one that wouldn't bend at all was [Harold K.] Levering. He was a nasty s.o.b.--oh, he was nasty. He never showed an ounce of friendship and that was conspicuous. The others all did. As for Mr. [Charles E.] Chāpel--is that how it's pronounced?

Chall: Some people say Chāpel. I've heard it both ways. I don't know.

Sankary: I can't remember how he said it anymore. But he was a maverick. He went out for--it seemed to me he wanted to gain attention. He'd get up and say funny, ridiculous things just to get attention to himself. And he was that way about bills. He would contradict himself going one way or another on bills.

Chall: That was it?

Sankary: I thought so.

Chall: I couldn't understand some of the bills.

Sankary: Yes, he went out for shock treatment and I think--I don't know if that was his purpose in women's bills or not.

Chall: Yes, that was--

Sankary: Shock treatment.

Chall: He was behind almost all of those women's bills that were put out in 1955.

Sankary: He was a peculiar, funny man and they tolerated him. They laughed at him and laughed with him. He was trying to be a comic all the time. He was just a kind of a joker in the assembly. One time at the end of the session my mother, husband and baby Tim visited the assembly. Chapel grabbed Timmy and threw him up in the air in the middle of the assembly room disrupting the proceedings.

Chall: Were his bills generally good bills that could be supported? This woman's bill--this was long before women would be given any of the treatment that he asked for.

Sankary: Yes, but they were a surprise from him.

Chall: I wondered how they came about.

Sankary: I wonder too, how he--

Chall: Whether the Business or Professional women would have been behind these bills?

Sankary: No, he would have been the last person I think that the women's groups would go to because he was unpredictable. He was just not a serious legislator. As a matter of fact, way back then, he was arrested I think, or he got into some kind of trouble on the airlines. He got on an airplane once as we traveled back and forth and he said, "Well, I've got a few guns and a bomb"--you know, he'd make remarks like that and get himself into such stupid trouble. I don't understand the man. I never did. Yet I liked him.

So I don't think the women's group would have gone to him. I think he did it just to be facetious or chivalrous.

Chall: Did he work hard for the bills that he put into the house?

Sankary: I don't think he worked hard on those bills that I recall and I don't remember any of his other bills. He was likable in a way because he was light. He took nothing seriously; nothing.

### Socializing

Chall: You mentioned socializing with the other legislators, men legislators, after a session for a drink or for lunch. That would indicate that you were treated as one of the boys?

Sankary: Yes, I was. I just had a wonderful time. If I had had more time I could have had a really good time!

Chall: Did they discuss legislation with you?

Sankary: Not after hours.

Chall: They would just unbend?

Sankary: They just liked to unbend. I always had a lot of invitations.

Chall: They weren't after you in any kind of sexual way?

Sankary: No.

Chall: Would they clean up their stories?

Sankary: If they did I wasn't aware of it. I don't recall anything very ribald or any dirty stories being told. I made two very good friends--well, one specifically. His name was Miller--was his name Allen Miller? Miller and William Munnell were always together and they were kind of a behind-the-scenes power all the time in Democratic circles. Mr. Miller was especially nice--and John McFall. I felt I had two very good friends.

Chall: There was an Allen Miller from San Fernando.

Sankary: He was especially nice, and John McFall was very nice. He is now in Congress.

Chall: Did you ever know Munnell at USC? He was a graduate I think of USC and I wondered if you'd known him.

Sankary: No, I didn't know him there.

Chall: So they were nice in what way?

Sankary: Well, what I mean is, like I would go to dinner with them privately or somewhere. Munnell never did. I think his wife was living in Sacramento but the others had more time. Let me see, who else in Democratic circles? Mr. [L.M.] Backstrand was a Republican but he was very nice. As far as socializing, I can't think of anyone specifically. There was John O'Connell, an attorney from San Francisco whom I felt close to. Allan Pattee and I became close friends. [Jesse] Unruh was around but Unruh was...a planner. He took me out one time and tried to educate me. He was so--what should I say?--serious. He was a driver, thinker, and serious, ambitious, and he knew what he wanted to do.

Now, Lanterman was always picking on him. I guess Lanterman didn't realize that Unruh would later become a power because Lanterman was vicious toward Unruh. There seemed to be a lot of ridiculing of Unruh. So when Unruh tried to persuade me to think along his lines, I think that's what dissuaded me--the fact that other people were ridiculing him that first year. He was kind of a--he seemed like an extremist.

Then there was Charlie Wilson who is in Congress. He impressed me very badly. I saw a lot of him, but down deep inside I didn't approve of his deviousness.

Chall: Wilson would have been in--did you say Congress?

Sankary: He is in Congress now. I saw a lot of him.

Chall: He was a freshman that year too.

Sankary: There was [Patrick] McGee and Pattee and wasn't there a Smith? Yes, I guess it was H. Allen Smith. Wasn't he the one running against--

Chall: Oh, you're thinking of the one who ran against Luther Lincoln? That's the same Smith.

Sankary: Well, we became pretty good friends even though he was a Republican. I never felt he was a sincere person. Should I say all of these things?

Chall: Yes.



# California Drycleaners Association

28 NORTH FIRST STREET

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA



March 4, 1955

## OFFICERS

PRESIDENT  
GEORGE H. LOBDELL  
10 MAIN STREET  
CHICO

PRESIDENT ELECT  
W. D. CARROLL  
16 E. BROADWAY  
LONG BEACH

VICE PRESIDENT  
HIL M. LEVEY  
MILLER AVENUE  
MILL VALLEY

PAST PRESIDENT  
NET C. BRYAN  
ARROYO PARKWAY  
PASADENA

TREASURER  
GEORGE RUIZ  
268 FRANKLIN  
SANTA CLARA

ROEANT-AT-ARMS  
INK G. HOOVER  
E. GRAND AVENUE  
ESCONDIDO

ADJUTANT SECRETARY  
GEORGE M. SHEPHERD  
NORTH FIRST STREET  
SAN JOSE  
CYPRESS 2-4767

## DIRECTORS

JOHN A. ABLITT  
JOSEPH VEY ALLARD  
ALLES  
ANDERSON  
AVERY  
L. F. BAKER  
L. J. BENSON  
BOWMAN  
E. BRITTAIN, JR.  
W. R. P. CALDU  
JOHN S. COCHRAN  
CHRISTENSEN  
B. COSTA  
C. COWLING  
T. A. ERMISCH  
FEATHERMAN  
FRANZETTI  
GALLAGHER  
L. O. W. HIGGINS  
J. JAFFE  
ROD S. JENSEN  
ARD KOREN  
KRAMMES  
E. KRATLIAN  
LOWER  
MCCOLAUGH  
MORRIS  
ROD K. NEWMAN  
RAUCH  
G. ROBERTS  
V. ROSE  
RUSSELL  
SATCHELL  
C. SEEM  
SHOEMAKER  
L. W. SMITH  
AN S. STEWARD  
N. SWANSON  
ROD TAYLOR  
HES WATTERS

Mrs. Wanda Sankary  
State Capitol  
Sacramento  
California

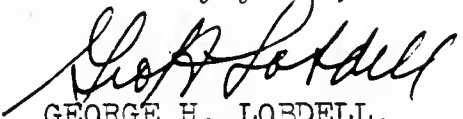
Dear Mrs. Sankary:

You are cordially invited to attend a dinner to be given in the Empire Room of the Senator Hotel in Sacramento on Sunday, March the 13th at 6:00 P.M., as the guest of Mr. and Mrs. George Hawkins of San Diego.

The dinner is given by the California Drycleaners Association and will afford you an opportunity to become better acquainted with the leaders in the drycleaning industry in your district and the entire State.

We hope that you will be able to attend this dinner as we feel sure that you will enjoy the entertainment which has been provided. Because of the rush of legislative work we plan to wind up our meeting about 9:00 P.M.

Sincerely yours,

  
GEORGE H. LOBDELL,  
President

cc: George Hawkins

*yes, Tell them  
I will be there*



Sankary: I intuitively feel things about people all my life and I didn't feel he was sincere and Charlie Wilson was not a sincere person. But McGee and Pattee, we just had fun together and I think they were both Republicans. And Joe Shell flew me to San Diego in his private plane.

Chall: Yes, Pattee was a Republican.  
[end tape 3, side A; begin tape 3, side B]

### Lobbying and Lobbyists

Sankary: Regarding dinner with lobbyists--some were very, very elaborate dinners--very. Oh, there were some to attend every night and every meal. There were more invitations than we could or cared to accept, a lot of money being spent on lunches and dinners. Not gifts. I don't recall any gifts at all. Perhaps at Christmas I got a box of oranges, something like that. I don't recall through the legislative sessions anything by way of gifts other than breakfast, luncheons, and dinner invitations.

Chall: I suppose you legislators weren't getting very much money so it probably helped to have a little coming in--even by way of meals.

Sankary: Yes, only \$500 a month (no cars, etc., as now) and there is where you made your friends, and enjoyed the camaraderie.

Chall: How was it?

Sankary: I enjoyed them tremendously.

Chall: At one point after one of your speeches, in answer to a question, you said something about lobbyists indicating that there could be hundreds. You said, "'Among the hundreds there are crooks and corrupt ones. Legislators who feel the financial strain perhaps will take money for their votes. To know this is going on is depressing. I am aware of it!' She said when she discussed the matter with others they told her she is not a policeman."\* Of course, that brought out a tremendous press coverage and criticism. There are three articles I copied for you. [tape interruption to examine papers]

---

\*San Diego Union, November 18, 1955.

# Row Flares Over Bribe Talk by Woman Solon

SACRAMENTO (AP)—The district attorney's office said today it will probe "as far as we can" any leads alleging that state legislators took bribes from lobbyists.

Chief Deputy Dist. Atty. Edward I. McCarthy said the investigation will go ahead despite the statement of Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary (San Diego) that she was misquoted when a Los Angeles newspaper reported her as saying she had "seen legislators in Sacramento take money for their votes."

"If anything turns up to show the statements attributed to her are true, we will investigate even if she denies the remarks," McCarthy said.

He said however, there were no plans to summon her before the district attorney or grand jury.

McCarthy said, "Unless Mrs. Sankary can give us some leads, it would be practically impossible to conduct any investigation at this late date, with the Legislature already over."

In San Diego last night, Mrs. Sankary issued a disclaimer of the remarks attributed to her.

## CLAIMS APOLOGY

She said that the reporter who was responsible has apologized.

Her statement came after J. Francis O'Shea, district attorney of Sacramento County, had asked her to give him "the names of the legislators and the names of lobbyists which you allege engaged in this operation."

O'Shea said he learned of the remark attributed to Mrs. Sankary from a letter Assemblyman Harold K. Levering (R-Los Angeles) wrote to her. Levering, one-time majority floor leader in the Assembly, sent copies of the letter to O'Shea and to J. D. Keller, San Diego County district attorney.

Levering said he read in a Los Angeles newspaper that Mrs. Sankary had said last week in a speech before the San Diego League of Democratic Women that she had seen money change hands.

"When I tried to do something about it and talked to other legislators," she was quoted, "they told me I wasn't a policeman."

Mrs. Sankary said, "It's unfortunate that people go off half-cocked" and that O'Shea should have given her the courtesy of allowing her to receive his letter before making it public.

She said that in her speech "I had mentioned that the great majority of lobbyists and legislators are people of integrity, intelligence and honesty."

## CASES CITED

She said she added, "Wherever there are human beings you will find human frailties and in groups there are bound to be some people who are corrupt."

To substantiate her statement she mentioned the conviction of Assemblymen Charles Lyon (R-Beverly Hills) and G. Delbert Morris (R-Los Angeles) in connection with liquor licenses. Lyon is in prison for bribery and Morris for perjury before a San Diego grand jury. She also mentioned the conviction of lobbyist Arthur Samish for federal income tax evasion.

## UNION NOV 25 1955 The Sankary Charges

ASSEMBLYWOMAN Wanda Sankary has done great disservice to government in California and to her fellow legislators with her loose charges concerning bribery in the Legislature.

By making general accusations, apparently without facts to support them, Mrs. Sankary places all legislators in a bad light, throwing suspicion where none is merited.

Mrs. Sankary, a young mother herself, placed especial shadow on young male legislators with children, implying that they are most easily bribed.

If Mrs. Sankary has actual evidence of bribery she should place it before proper authorities. If she does not have, she would do well to talk less irresponsibly.

HOME ADDRESS  
1036 SAVOY STREET  
SAN DIEGO 7

SACRAMENTO ADDRESS  
STATE CAPITOL  
ZONE 14



COMMITTEES  
CONSERVATION, PLANNING,  
PUBLIC WORKS  
MANUFACTURING, OIL, AND  
MINING INDUSTRY  
PUBLIC UTILITIES AND  
CORPORATIONS  
RULES

FRANK LUCKEL

MEMBER OF ASSEMBLY, SEVENTY-EIGHTH DISTRICT  
RULES COMMITTEE

November 23, 1955

The Honorable Thomas M. Erwin  
Assemblyman, the 50th District  
1016 North Willow Avenue  
Pueente, California

Dear Tom:

Re yours of November 21st.

I will outline the facts as I know  
them, without any expression of opinion.

Shortly after the Sankary speech  
a friend of mine told me about same. This Party stressed the construct-  
ive nature of Mrs. Sankary's remarks, and outlined how she had given  
credit to myself and Speaker Lincoln for the fine Committee assignments  
of San Diego County Legislators. Furthermore, she was reported to have  
outlined the importance of my position on the Rules Committee insofar as  
San Diego was concerned. These constructive remarks were stressed  
rather than the criticism of Lobbyists, etc., etc., which took place during  
the question and answer period.

However, the newspaper writeup  
which appeared after the above report, merely outlined the certain criticism  
of Lobbyists and Legislators without the slightest reference to the other  
broad discussions.

When I attended a meeting of some  
seven Republican Womens' groups on November 22, to introduce Senator  
Kuchel, the Reporter who had reported the Sankary speech accosted me. He  
volunteered the information that the article in the Los Angeles Times had  
misquoted Mrs. Sankary in some important manner.





FRANK LUCKEL

MEMBER OF ASSEMBLY, SEVENTY-EIGHTH DISTRICT  
RULES COMMITTEE

The Honorable Thomas M. Erwin

November 23, 1955

Page Two

Thereafter, the San Diego Union carried an article giving Mrs. Sankary's viewpoints and confirming the expressed opinion of this Reporter. This article was dated this morning, November 23., and is enclosed herewith.

I think it is quite definitely known hereabouts that both San Diego daily newspapers have not been favorable to either Mrs. Sankary or me since we supported Lincoln for the Speakership.

Respectfully yours,

FL:LL

Copies To:

Assemblyman Wanda Sankary

Assemblyman R. L. Lincoln

FRANK LUCKEL  
ASSEMBLYMAN  
STATE LEGISLATURE  
1036 Savoy Street  
San Diego 7



Sankary: I think this article comes close to what I said. I also have a tape recording of an interview I subsequently made with the reporter who put some of these articles in the paper in which he admits that he changed my words. I have a piece of tape that I saved because I sued some people for this. If I can find that tape--I've got a bunch of tapes in here that we might look into. Let me see, in this article [Union, November 18, 1955] they pick that one thing up and blow it up. It even went into the L.A. Times and the L.A. Times retracted it. The San Diego Union-Tribune, powerful as it was, refused to retract, and it was their reporter whom I have on tape. But we didn't have the time nor enough assurance of winning, to sue. San Diego was controlled then by Copely and the Republican party. It was Nixon's "favorite city" even recently.

Chall: You said you enjoyed your lunches and dinners with the lobbyists and your fellow legislators. Did you feel you were being--

Sankary: Bribe? No.

Chall: Pressured?

Sankary: Well, there was a vague feeling that these people must want something for this entertainment. Yet I recall specific ones that came to me afterwards and even though it hurt, I would turn down--even though I'd had a nice big dinner with them. I would really weigh it to see if I was for the legislation or not.

Prior to my experience with the county medical association Mr. Nute--I think, he represented the San Diego Medical Society--took me out to dinner. I recall now that he was extremely handsome.

All the lobbyists were chosen for being good looking and personable--and, ooh, they made so much money. I remember their saying that their salaries were like seventy thousand a year, plus a hundred thousand for expenses. We were so jealous because our salary was only six thousand I think at that time--five or six thousand. I could see that the people in the legislature were not as exciting and interesting and educated as the group that was outside the legislature. Because for that kind of money they could pick the finest people in the world, I guess. So these were a very attractive bunch.

Usually everybody's invited and you feel if they go, why shouldn't I. I mean, they're going to spend this money anyway. I don't owe them anything just because they put on a dinner. I'm just another legislator and there are about eighty of them there each time. So my conscience really didn't hurt that much, going and accepting that gift.

Sankary: But Mr. Nute took me out personally alone for dinner, which was unusual. I paid no attention to the fact that he was so gorgeous--attractive and young. The next morning somebody said, "Good morning, Mrs. Sankary" and I didn't recognize him. I said, "Now, tell me what your name is" and he said, "Why, I just had dinner with you last night." So that's how poor a politician I was. He never impressed me. I've thought about that for years; why I don't remember people's faces--even when they're gorgeous [laughter] and personable! And then I'd go to bat against them yet! Anyway, where was I?

Chall: You didn't feel then--

Sankary: They didn't approach me but as I was there I gathered--here and there--that people were being paid for votes--I mean paid in one way or another with campaign contributions, promises, or something. You just sort of felt or absorbed this existence of fact.

Chall: None of your fellow freshmen would mention it to you?

Sankary: I think there was actual mentioning that so-and-so will give you a big campaign contribution if you do this--but I can't recall anything specifically.

Chall: Because it's something you'd certainly be learning as rapidly as possible I would think.

Sankary: If you were ambitious. But I was just too unconcerned to plan to get reelected. I never thought of that. I never thought of what was expedient for me, never thought of a future in politics. And I recall later--the last day of the session I had dinner alone with John McFall before we all spread out, and he said he was going to run for Congress. I remember him bawling me out at that dinner; just the two of us. He said, "For heaven sakes, you had such a tremendous future and you're blowing it. You're not doing anything. You should be leading the San Diego delegation. You should be the big voice here in the assembly. Do something with it. You can go a long way in politics."

I said, "Gee, you mean I wasted opportunities?" That would have come as a surprise to me, but I should have been thinking about ambition, about what's good for Wanda Sankary.

Chall: But basically you were torn between your job and the babies so that you didn't think ahead.

Sankary: I didn't want to go back to Sacramento and Congress--

Chall: Congress would have been much more difficult.

Sankary: So there was this torn feeling of which way should I go. I had once before met a crossroads like that. I don't know if I mentioned it or not on the earlier tapes, but when I got out of law school and I had fallen in love with Morris Sankary, Justice Douglas had requested I apply to be his clerk. Here again I was torn. Had I gone that route, no one knows where I would have been today. I would have gotten involved first in California then in Washington politics and if I had made my career important it would have been a tremendous stepping stone. Who knows where I would have been today at fifty-seven. Again, I didn't grasp my opportunities in my legal profession either. I really sacrificed it for the children.

Chall: But this was the early 1950s, the years that are referred to in The Feminine Mystique. Women were expected not to be ambitious in their careers. They were expected to have a home and a family and you were really coming up in that time.

Sankary: Well, I think I'm that kind of a woman. I am a clinging-vine type. I need to love and to be loved and cared for. I'm very sentimental and I need my family around me. I'm very sensitive and I wasn't ready for the rough and tumble of politics, at the time I went into it.

Chall: Was it rough and tumble? To stay in might have been rough and tumble, but was it rough and tumble while you were up there?

Sankary: Yes, it was. It was hard because you did get pressures and you had to say no. The hours were long and you were getting worn out and tired. I have written someplace in my notes, that several people got sick and several people died in that session, they were so overworked. It was an unusually hard session.

Chall: The men were working--except for the fact that you were on more committees--but you felt that they were all putting in the same kind of time--those who were serious?

Sankary: Yes, and I recall everyone saying that this was the hardest session they had had, even some who had been there twenty years.

Apropos of the women, they were always very nice and I'm sure that they said that if you need any help, I will help you. They were just lovely, really both of them were just great. I had never belonged to any women's clubs and coming from a conservative town--all of the women in San Diego then and mostly now are Republican. I was invited once to the President's Club which was a group of women, ex-presidents of various associations. When I ran for reelection, although I had espoused the women's causes, and I always listened, and had given a lot of time to the lobbyists that

Sankary: came up, when it came time to run for election, they worked against me and would not endorse me. Mr. Crawford made a big issue of the fact that the women's groups were against Mrs. Sankary and this was one of the most painful experiences to me. I couldn't understand that. When Mrs. Gupta [Ruth Church] one of the two women's lobbyists contacted me for legislation, I always complied. This was a very bitter experience to feel that it was just because I was a Democrat--I felt that that was the only reason.

Chall: The League of Women Voters would be lobbying for and against bills but they don't support candidates. But the Business and Professional Women have always supported women, particularly if they wanted them to get ahead.

Sankary: Not me. And yet the other two women were Democrats and they did support them in their towns. I don't know how Mr. Crawford managed to pull this off, but he got them against me, in mine.

Chall: They actually wouldn't give you any support? They did endorse him?

Sankary: They did; at least he made a big news story of it.

Chall: I see; that's curious.

Sankary: Yes, it was a very painful experience. Let me see, I just ran across a letter I wrote to somebody about that. [Pause to search for letter]

I think I'm wandering all over the place.

Chall: No, that's all right. You may think you're wandering but you're not.

The major thing that we're talking about, has been lobbying--good lobbying and lobbying that you found oppressive. The people who lobby for and against legislation like the Quakers did on bills for civil rights and FEPC and things of this kind--they are really quite concerned about issues. So, of course, is the American Medical Society. They're concerned.

I guess the Friends Committee on Legislation can't give you any money, but a powerful lobbying group like the liquor lobby or the lobbyists having to do with the American Medical Association can. I suppose you can look at them in different ways, but they're still trying to educate you for and against legislation.

You felt, you told me that even if you accepted their favors, you were strong enough to stand where you wanted to. If you didn't really understand you would give them the benefit of the doubt and you'd go back and look at the bill. Was it McFall who told you you were not helping your career in any way--

**California**



68a

**Federation of Business and Professional  
Women's Clubs**

MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF  
BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CLUBS, INC.

**STATE OFFICERS**

**PRESIDENT**

Miss EVELYN E. WHITLOW  
1805 Wilshire Boulevard  
Los Angeles 57, California

*Per 89307*

**FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT**

Mrs. LADOCIA ELLIS  
1350 Bidwell Avenue  
Chico, California

**SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT**

Mrs. DOROTHY M. FORD  
3006 Odessa  
Encino, California

**THIRD VICE-PRESIDENT**

Mrs. ELIZABETH EVANS CHAPMAN  
1231 W. Magnolia Street  
Stockton, California

**RECORDING SECRETARY**

Mrs. HELEN G. CHAPMAN  
360 East Holt Avenue  
Pomona, California

**TREASURER**

Mrs. MARJORIE S. HITCH  
2160 Leavenworth St.  
San Francisco 11, California

**JUNIOR PAST PRESIDENT**

Mrs. GLADYS ANNE SHEERIN  
320 W. Willow Street  
Visalia, California

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

Miss JEANNETTE CALKINS  
681 Market Street, Room 223  
San Francisco 5, California

**Dear Friend:**

Enclosed is a copy of our magazine which goes to each of the members of the California Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. We are sending you a copy of this issue because on page 9 it contains an "Open Letter" to the members of the California Legislature.

Our legislative aims are few, but we are deeply interested in the matters discussed in the "open letter", and we look forward to the opportunity to discuss them with you in further detail. We are sincerely grateful for the reception we have always received in Sacramento.

The members of the Business and Professional Women's Club in your community are interested in your program, and we hope that you have the opportunity to meet with them and learn more about our program.

At any time I shall be most happy to discuss with you any questions you may have concerning the platform and objectives of the California Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

Sincerely yours,

RUTH CHURCH GUPTA  
Legislative Advocate  
2237 Chestnut Street  
San Francisco 23

**Enclosure**

# An Open Letter . . .

68b

## To the Members of the California Legislature

Dear Friends:

ALTHOUGH PERSONAL THANKS have been expressed to many of our good friends in the California Legislature for their assistance and cooperation in connection with the aims and objectives of the legislative program of our Federation, this seems to be an appropriate time to direct an open letter to you so that all may know of our appreciation for your efforts.

At the risk of omitting the names of many of those who aided and encouraged us in the furtherance of our legislative plans during these past two years, we should like to make special mention of the kindness of some of the legislators at Sacramento. A list such as this should, of course, start with the names of two Assemblywomen, *Dorothy Donahoe* from Bakersfield and *Pauline Davis* from Portola. These very able women received our endorsement because they have demonstrated that they are qualified women who are in accord with the principles, practices and legislative platform of the California Federation of BPWC. Their counsel during these past two years has been greatly appreciated.

There were a number of authors of bills introduced in the 1955 Session which were the result of our recommendations. Assemblyman *Charles Chapel* of Inglewood authored several measures for us, including AB 498, the Equal Pay measure. Assemblyman Chapel was particularly helpful in arranging conferences for us with the office of the Legislative Counsel and with other interested groups and was very helpful in making constructive suggestions. Senator *Arthur W. Way* of Eureka introduced a similar Equal Pay bill in the Senate. Senator *Donald L. Grunsky* of Watsonville introduced the resolution requesting a review of Part IV of the Labor Code, which resolution resulted in the Senate Labor Committee hearings held in June, 1956. Co-authors of a similar resolution in the Assembly were: Assemblyman *Chapel* of Inglewood; *William Munnell* of Montebello; *Allen Miller* of San Fernando; *Charles Conrad* of Sherman Oaks; *Bruce F. Allen* of San Jose; *Carlos Bee* of Hayward; *Frank G. Bonelli* of Huntington Park; *Ralph M. Brown* of Modesto; *Rex M. Cunningham* of Ventura; *Walter I. Dahl* of Oakland; *Pauline Davis* of Portola; *Dorothy Donahoe*, Bakersfield; *Donald D. Doyle*, Lafayette;

*Thomas J. Doyle*, Los Angeles; *Gordon Fleury*, Sacramento; *Samuel R. Geddes*, Napa; *W. S. Grant*, Long Beach; *Wallace D. Henderson*, Fresno; *Vernon Kilpatrick*, Lynwood; *Francis C. Lindsay*, Loomis; *S. C. Masterson*, Richmond; *John J. McFall*, Manteca; *Thomas M. Rees*, Los Angeles; *Byron Rumsford*, Berkeley; and *Wanda Sankary*, San Diego.

AB 498, the provision for amendment and strengthening of the Equal Pay Law, was heard before the Assembly Industrial Relations Committee and favorably acted upon by that committee. We most certainly appreciate the manner in which that committee considered the bill, and the cooperation in particular of the Committee Chairman, *Wallace D. Henderson* of Fresno, and of *James L. Holmes* of Santa Barbara, *Walter I. Dahl* of Oakland, *S. C. Masterson* of Richmond and *Wanda Sankary* of San Diego for the active part they took in the committee's deliberations. *Edward M. Gaffney* and *John A. O'Connell* of San Francisco likewise voted favorably on the passage of the bill by the committee.

After the favorable action in the Industrial Relations Committee on the Equal Pay bill, it was referred to the Ways and Means Committee of the Assembly with 28 members. It was heard late one afternoon at a meeting chaired by Assemblyman *Caspar Weinberger*. Assemblyman *Dorothy Donahoe* moved for the approval of the bill by the committee, but it failed to receive sufficient votes because so many members of the committee had left the hearing and it was impossible to obtain the necessary majority vote.

A special word of appreciation is due the Senate Labor Committee which has devoted considerable time since the adjournment of the 1956 Budget Session in hearing testimony in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento relative to our proposal for amendment to Section 1350 of the Labor Code, the Eight Hour Law. The members of that committee are *F. Presley Abshire* of Santa Rosa, who is the chairman of the committee but because of a serious automobile accident was unable to attend the hearings in person, but who has followed the proceedings from his home by means of the transcripts; *Donald L. Grunsky* of Watsonville, the author of the resolution; *Harold T. Johnson* of Roseville; *Robert I. Montgomery* of Hanford (acting chairman of the committee and a skillful moderator); *John A. Murdy*,

*Jr.* of Huntington Beach; *Louis G. Sutton* of Maxwell; and *J. Howard Williams* of Porterville. Each member of the committee listened attentively and thoughtfully to all witnesses. The effective questioning of the witnesses by the committee, and particularly by Senator Grunsky and the committee counsel, *Louis Boli, III*, resulted in a wealth of material now before the committee for study. We have every confidence that their action will be in the best interests of all of the people of our great state.

To all of the members of the Legislature who listened to and approved of the cause of the Business and Professional Women's Clubs, whether or not our bills had an opportunity to get before them in committee or on the floor, we express our thanks. We believe the members of the Legislature realize that we are an organization of approximately 17,000 women in 311 clubs throughout the state of California, dedicated to a program of seeking equality and justice for the employed women of our state, through the appropriate legislative channels.

When we return in 1957 asking the Legislature to pass on our proposals, we are confident we will continue to receive the most courteous and helpful assistance of our elected officials.

With every good wish on behalf of all of our members,

Sincerely yours,

CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF BUSINESS  
AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CLUBS

EVELYN E. WHITLOW, *President*

RUTH CHURCH GUPTA,  
*Legislative Advocate*

## Western Region Meeting Scheduled for Hawaii

"BPW" Heaven—Hawaii in '57"

This is the slogan adopted by the Hawaii Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and is most heartily endorsed by the officers and members of the Western Regional Council.

Your Regional Chairman, *Lela E. Swayse*, is anxious to meet and greet every member of the Western Region—in particular, and any Federation member—their relatives and friends. Your Vice-Chairman, *Frances Alexander*, is eager to extend the famous and traditional "Aloha" on your arrival.

WHERE? Honolulu, Hawaii

WHEN? July 25, 26, 27, 1957



Sankary: And Unruh.

Chall: Was Unruh really trying to give you that kind of advice too?

Sankary: That was at the beginning of the session where he sought me out and said, "Now, let's get our heads together and see where we're going and what we want to accomplish." I sort of brushed him off because at that time--he was not really accepted as a voice. He was a freshman too and I didn't realize that he may have had a lot more savvy and background than I had. So I didn't take him seriously.

But apropos of the lobbyists the thought comes to me that I was concerned about it because I ran across something where I had proposed that the candidates for the legislature--the California legislature--be given public funds so that they could have a campaign fund free of lobbyist influence. Now, that was way back there twenty-two years ago and yet now in 1977 Common Cause has that very same proposal before the federal Congress. I had forgotten doing that and yet this was something I had proposed at that early date.

In this bill the state would pay to party county central committees fifty cents for each registered voter of any political party. These funds would be spent for campaign expenses of nominees.

Now, this was a revolutionary idea and the Republicans screamed bloody murder and the newspapers called it "Democratic boondoggling." A simple law has now been enacted as far as presidential campaigns in the United States, and it is the same kind of view that is held by Common Cause for congressional campaigns. Its time will come.

#### The Committees and the Committee Process

Chall: Could you tell me about your committees? We won't go into legislation on the committees but the committees themselves. The Judiciary Committee?

Sankary: I was the first woman in California's history on that.

Chall: There were some very important bills that went through there having to do with civil rights and other matters that we'll talk about next time we get together. I'll let you look at the other members of the committee and maybe you can give me some idea of which ones of them impressed you the most. This is the list of Judiciary Committee members.

Sankary: All right, I'm listening.

Chall: All right, do you want me to give you the names? There were Mr. Fleury, Mr. Smith, Allen. Allen would have been Bruce Allen.

Sankary: Oh, yes, I can vaguely remember him.

Chall: Bradley [Clark].

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: Brady, Brown, Caldecott, Dickey, Dolwig, Ernest Geddes, Lyon, McFall, McGee, Masterson, McMillan, Miller--is that George Miller?

Sankary: No, that's Allen Miller.

Chall: That's right, George is the senator. O'Connell and Weinberger.

Sankary: Yes, that's Caspar Weinberger.

Chall: Now, some of these men you've mentioned as being those whom you went out with to dinner afterwards so that some of these people became your friends. What about Mr. Weinberger who was certainly an important person in those days?

Sankary: He was a loner. He didn't socialize at all. I never saw him any place, never, and he wasn't a really friendly, outgoing person. I didn't get to know him at all.

Chall: How about some of the other members? Were there any that impressed you? Look at the list.

Sankary: Fleury [Gordon] was a very friendly little guy from Sacramento. He was nice. Didn't appear serious about our work but possibly was. I think he left soon; was appointed judge. Smith was very nice. I liked him. He was not a heavyweight professionally. The politician type, I thought. Allen I barely remember. Bradley was a conservative Republican, extremely serious and political animal. Brady [Bernard] had about ten children and was a nice family man and a friendly outgoing fellow; always laughing and joking. Brown was my roommate. He was from central California some place. He was a very serious man, respected and admirable. Caldecott [Thomas W.] was a studious, erudite man. I respected him. Dickey [Randal] I didn't get to know very well and he's considerably older but very respected also. Dolwig [Richard] was a friendly man, a mixer type. He seemed rather devious to me. Ernest Geddes was a nice, older man.

McFall, [John] was serious, quiet, thoughtful. McGee, a lightweight, self-serving, political type but the handsomest man in the assembly and knew it. Masterson [S.C.] was a good friend of

Sankary: mine--a former judge I think he was. He fought for social justice. MacMillan [Lester] was a good friend of mine, a very, very, nice guy. We were good friends. He was very upstanding and a fighter for justice also. Miller [Allen], O'Connell [John]--we were all pals I felt and agreed on most issues, these last four.

Chall: Later when we take up the legislation that your committee was concerned with--I would imagine that there must have been rather heated discussions over some civil rights matters.

Sankary: I think it kind of split on party lines--

Chall: I guess what I'd like to know, even without discussing bills, is how the committee worked among themselves. Did most committee members attend committee meetings and did they rely upon their own homework, to understand the bills?

Sankary: As I recall, we were given a set of the bills that would appear before us to consider--about a day in advance. We were supposedly reading them and people would come to our office, to lobby, and try and talk to us about them. They'd catch you in the hall to discuss a bill. So by the time you got to the committee hearing, a lot of members may have heard these bills over and over and over--even in previous years. They were familiar with them--may have had their mind already made up. But to me it was just an avalanche of reading bills and trying to understand them. Every day new material.

So I listened quite seriously to the witnesses who usually were representatives of one side or another and tried to make up my mind that way. Sometimes someone would come by whose opinion I valued, and would advise me on a bill that wasn't their bill but who would say, "Oh, this is good and this is bad and this is why." They helped me that way. I'd ask other legislators that were of my views--Mr. Miller [chuckles]--not Mr. Hegland. Although we were very good friends, I never had any arguments that I recall--any unpleasantness with any legislator throughout the whole time, which is surprising because I'm a very aggressive woman--always fighting somebody in the law. And I don't recall having any fights in the legislature. Maybe I was intimidated.

But I know the one thing that does remain in my memory is when the first time--or every time--I went to a committee hearing, they had put the members of the committee up on a dias so high--like judges--to make everybody look small and feel small below us. I always felt a little guilty about that--elevating us like that. [Chuckles] It was like it was a deliberate thing. I never felt that there was any reason for it. I know that there was a lot of kidding around in the committees but generally everyone attended and worked. Constituents, reporters and lobbyists would come to committee hearings in Sacramento.

Chall: Did you find yourself comfortable about questioning witnesses during committee hearings?

Sankary: I didn't have any trouble with that.

Chall: Then in the committees themselves when you were just working alone, were you listened to? Were you paid attention to?

Sankary: Like if I presented a bill of mine to somebody else's committee? Yes, I felt confident and respected.

Chall: Either that or arguing your points within the committee. The committees had to vote on whether or not that bill was going either to another committee or to the floor and that's where you would have to discuss and argue.

Sankary: I think it was always done previously and privately. I didn't feel slighted by others although I felt a little unsure of myself at times. I was getting an education and therefore I was willing to listen. I don't recall any committee hearing that we actually got into any arguments or trying to convince each other. It all seemed pretty cut and dried in the committee. When an issue would come up and we all knew how one side would vote and how the other side would vote, there might be just laughter and banter across--"Well, of course, we know how you're going to vote" or something like that. But not any real pressure between the legislators.

Chall: So the work actually in committee was done by taking testimony and then it was just pro forma, either getting it out or killing it.

Sankary: Yes, it seemed to all just go without a lot of inter-committee discussion. At least I don't recall ever having any large arguments in the committee between committee members. They either had their minds made up before or were so familiar with it that anything anyone else said was just all familiar territory being covered and tolerated because it was for the benefit of the press.

Chall: You were concerned, as I recall it, with a number of bills that were dropped into the hopper and there were--I think--four thousand or so the year you were there. It was quite difficult to get a handle on very many of them.

Sankary: Yes, it was. Yes--that was too many bills--so many duplications too. To me it seemed like such a waste of money; it didn't seem like an efficient manner of running government to me. [Laughter] I could see so many things I would have liked to change.

[The following question and answer were added during editing.]

Chall: Can you now recall any?

Sankary: First, that there should be a limit on campaign spending.

Second, that no large contribution can be made by special groups.

Third, that the members of the legislature be made to vote what's best for the whole state rather than the divisive practice of each pulling for his own constituents, his own district.

Fourth, that a screening process avoid all duplication in bills entered.

Fifth, that all silly and personal resolutions and comments be eliminated or outlawed.

Sixth, that no committee hearings in either house be scheduled at the same time as voting in your chamber.

Seventh, that lobbyists be forbidden in the halls or in the chambers at all times.

Eighth, that a bill should only be considered by one committee before presented to the whole house.

Ninth, that every legislator be forced to take a stand on every bill and not refrain from voting even if he is absent.

Chall: How many days would you stay in Sacramento?

Sankary: I always stayed the full week. I never came home before Friday.

Chall: And then you flew back?

Sankary: Yes, Monday morning.

Chall: So you would come in Friday night and leave Sunday night or early Monday morning.

Sankary: This is something that bothered me in Crawford's campaign. He kept saying I was absent all the time. I think I can say without exception he never made one truthful statement. I can't think of one statement he made that was true. Every single thing he uttered was a lie and so many people behind him did so too--it was really a shock.

Chall: So it was very hard to even set your own record straight?

Sankary: Yes, in the Copely press. I am so naive even now that I am suffering from shock recalling the things they would do. [Laughter] I can't seem to harden up and accept the fact that people are bad dudes at times.

Chall: Somebody has said that politicians have to accept the fact that there's a dark side to people.

Sankary: I've never learned that. How long does it take to learn?

Chall: Maybe you never will.

Sankary: I'm just so shocked at the things people do with their life. Life is so short!

Chall: Since we're going to skip over all of legislation now, how about the governor? What was your impressions of the administration and of Governor Goodwin Knight while you were there? Did you pay much attention to it?

Sankary: Yes. I was very disappointed in a lot of ways and yet he was a very personable person--a jolly, friendly guy. I have a letter where he invited me down to see him on a certain day and it happened to be the first day of April. I have a little note on it for my secretary to call and find out if he really wanted me there or was it an April Fool's joke. [Chuckles] I really love April Fool's jokes.

Chall: Maybe somebody else sent it to you.

Sankary: No, I went down there anyway.

[end tape 3, side B; begin tape 4, side A]

Sankary: I gathered from the kind of vetoes he made and the things that he was for--despite his friendly exterior--that he was a very political man who did what was expedient rather than what was good for the people. I disagreed with him so much and particularly a bill we worked very hard on. This was a measure authored by, I think, Delbert Morris, that received an eight-eight vote in the Judiciary Committee. In fact the tie vote was to kill the bill.

So after that we took the bill out and I went to work with Morris, a stranger to me. I rounded up enough votes in the assembly to withdraw the bill from the committee and we lobbied it through the assembly. I talked to all the assemblymen to get it through the assembly. The bill dealt with violence in magazines and comic books--it had to do with violence.

Chall: One of the newspaper articles said you voted for a bill outlawing crime and lewd comic books. "'The bill would exempt newspaper comics,' she said."

Sankary: Then all of the lobbyists representing the newspapers, and books--and magazine distributors were lobbying this heavily because they said it would be press censorship. I worked harder on it, I think,



State of California  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE  
SACRAMENTO

April 1, 1955

Honorable Wanda Sankary  
Member of the Assembly  
State Capitol  
Sacramento 14, California

Dear Mrs. Sankary:

Would appreciate your coming down  
to the office immediately to discuss a  
particular subject with me.

Regards.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. J. Knight".

Governor

GJK;e





Sankary: than Mr. Morris did. Then I actually went to the senate committee with him and worked on it there and we got it through the senate. All of that time--the weeks, and the hours, and the effort we put in. Getting everyone to vote for it was something in the face of all those lobbyists--and when it got up to Goodie Knight he vetoed it!

So when I was campaigning after that and I was running for reelection, I mentioned it I think once or twice and, boy, he sent a representative to me and asked me to stop mentioning his name. He was very careful about his image. He didn't want me mentioning that.

Chall: Do you have any recollection of what brought that particular bill up? Were there some very, very bad comic books coming out at that time?

Sankary: No; but I think if I'm not mistaken, I put in a bill that would eliminate violence in movies--not sex in movies, but just violence--and I got the movie industry lobbyist down on top of me. The bill got nowhere. It probably died in committee. He gave me a very special invitation to come to Hollywood. He was trying to con me out of the idea. He was going to take me through all the movie studios and introduce me to these movie stars. I never went. I was concerned about violence on television and in movies because these things had long been bothering me.

Chall: Do you recall whether that was on your own? You have a little packet of bills I notice--that were your bills--so that will probably be among them. But when you're a freshman legislator and new about all of this as you were, I would think that it would have been hard to even know how to get a bill in.

Sankary: I found out all you had to do was to go to the library and they write your bill for you.

Chall: So you just told them what you wanted--

Sankary: Yes. You see, not having any issues, when I ran across something like Mr. Morris's bill then I became personally, and emotionally interested in what would be good for children.

Chall: So you were concerned then about violence in the movies--did you get a bill in about movie violence?

Sankary: I don't know if I actually got one in or not. I know that I got a lot of static when I mentioned it. I think I requested it printed and got a bill going, but I don't know how far it really went. But I remembered it wasn't only their lobbies, but a lot of people, many legislators, told me to put it off, till I was more effective and had more power to succeed with it.

- Cnall: Yes, it would have been a First Amendment issue as it is now. They're still struggling with the same thing.
- Sankary: Gee, I hope I put a bill in. I hope I did. I know I intended to. I can't remember. I wish I had more information for you. My memory is not the best.
- Chall: Well, anybody who wants to can find it in the record. But this Morris bill then you kind of took up on your own?
- Sankary: Yes.
- Chall: And it was vetoed by the governor?
- Sankary: Yes.
- Chall: You don't know how Morris felt about that, do you?
- Sankary: No, I don't know how he felt about it but I have names of all the people who voted against it. Caldecott, Dolwig, Bruce Allen, Caspar Weinberger, Fleury. Expediency dictated it, undoubtedly-- campaigns to think about, personal advancement. They wanted newspaper support.
- Chall: This was in the Judiciary Committee?
- Sankary: Yes.
- Chall: Who voted for it?
- Sankary: Bradley, surprisingly; he's a conservative Republican. Brady, Dickey, Lyon, MacMillan, Miller, and H. Allen Smith.
- Chall: That was kind of mixed. It wasn't along party lines. Since the vote of the committee is important, how about the caucuses. You were participating in the Democratic caucus. How important was the Democratic caucus?
- Sankary: It didn't seem to be very important. I don't recall we ever took a solid stand on anything.
- Chall: What did you do in the caucuses then?
- Sankary: I think we discussed a stand on bills and ended up in disagreement. We didn't have a united front. There's nothing I can say about the caucus of significance.

### A Legislator's Typical Day

Sankary: I have an article here that gives my description of a routine of the legislature.\* Would you be interested in that? It says [reading and paraphrasing], Arriving at the office at 8:00; several people waiting to talk about one piece of legislation or another. Senate committee hearings start at 9:00 A.M. If you have a bill before that committee you have to round up your witnesses and present your arguments there and you're due at your own roll call at 9:30 which is in the assembly chambers, where voting on six thousand measures proceeds until 3:00 P.M.--occasionally having no break for lunch. That's true.

Assembly committee hearings starting at three." I had six committee hearings a week running as late as 1:30 in the morning: "listening to opponents and proponents of legislation; mail--having to consider a lot of mail.

I remember Senator Richards from L.A. got several bags of mail and mine would just be about that high. [Gestures, indicating about one foot.] Still it was a lot of mail to read.

[Continues to read] If they didn't identify the bill you had to track it down. What are they talking about? You had to look for the particular bill.

Then the bill is heard in several committees and it goes down to the floor for voting and before the other house. Then the bill may be amended as many as a dozen times and start through committees all over again. Approximately six thousand bills introduced; amendments and changes; weekend visits; public appearances, telephone calls, and interviews at home. There was no resting.

During the interim between sessions, measures that failed to pass the vote or were vetoed by the governor, needed more study. These were considered by interim committees.

They said it was very rare for a freshman to get on an interim committee--which I didn't request--but they put me on this Joint Senate-Assembly Committee on Highways. When the legislature ended then I was traveling around the state looking at highways. I was also on the Assembly Interim Committee on Finance and Insurance. I don't remember any specific legislation this committee considered.

---

\*The Southeastern Times, December 15, 1955



## Legislature Routine Is Rugged Says Assemblywoman

Wanda Sankary, State Assemblywoman whose 79th District covers a large part of Southeast San Diego, is the lady who was recently challenged in a story published in the daily press with charges of missing a large portion of the recent legislative sessions this year. When questioned by THE TIMES' reporter, Mrs. Sankary denied the charge, stating that she seldom missed a session of the Assembly, including evening and Saturday meetings.

That the work of a California legislator is not simple or easy, is attested by the story below which is now some weeks old in the Editor's basket, but still good and to the point.

Mrs. Wanda Sankary, on return from Sacramento at the end of the Assembly session reported it to be a most grueling one, in which she was thankful for her robust health and endurance. During the 120 day session of the State Legislature, six legislators died from the strain. A typical day in the life of an assemblywoman would be as follows:

On arriving at her office at 8 a.m., she finds several people waiting to talk about one piece of legislation or another. Senate Committee hearings start at 9 a.m. and if she has a bill scheduled for hearing there, she rounds up her witnesses and prepares to present the arguments before the particular committee. She is due for her own roll call at 9:30 in

the Assembly Chambers, where voting on 6000 measures proceeds until 3 p.m., occasionally having no break whatever for lunch. Assembly committees begin at 3 p.m. Mrs. Sankary (being a member of five committees) had six committee hearings a week running until 1:30 a.m. at times. In sitting on these committees, she would listen to arguments of proponents and opponents of legislation coming before that committee and consider mail from constituents relative to the matters being heard. Daily mail, after opening, created a stack of papers about one foot high, taking hours to read and answer. Usually, the legislation to which a letter referred, had to be tracked down at a great cost of time for often the letter failed to give the number of the bill or otherwise properly identify it.

When a bill is introduced, it is heard by the proper committee or several committees of one house, then it goes down to the floor of that house for voting and then to the proper committee or committees of the other house and then to the floor of that second house. At any stage in this process the bill may be amended, as many as a dozen times, and be started through the committees all over again. Therefore, although there were approximately 6000 bills introduced, amendments and changes necessitated their being read and reread several times, before the legislator could intelligently vote upon them.

Mrs. Sankary's weekend visits home with her family were crowded with public appearances, telephone calls and interviews on legislative matters.

During the interim measures that failed to pass both houses or were vetoed by the Governor, measures in other words that need more study before being made into law will be heard and considered by interim committees. Mrs. Sankary has been appointed to one interim committee of great importance. It is a joint Senate and Assembly Committee on Transportation problems.

The Southeastern Times

Chall: What about the one that dealt with the death penalty. I noticed you were going around on some of those hearings with the Judiciary Committee. I don't know whether that was an interim committee or not. You were opposed to the death penalty?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: You were taking testimony in Los Angeles--a hearing out of Sacramento.

Sankary: I vaguely remember that there was an emotional fight on that. But I was dead set against it.

Chall: You had taken your stand apparently. It was already known.

Sankary: Yes. I took that cause as my own even though it was on a committee that wasn't one of mine and it did come eventually before the Assembly Judiciary Committee. I was in favor of the abolition of the death penalty because there was a lot of evidence that it is no effective deterrent to murders and killings and that many persons executed were mentally ill even though "legally sane." I also urged that the law defining this "legal sanity" be changed and clarified.

We also considered the fact that thirty other countries had already eliminated the death penalty and that from '45 to '55 in California there were 3,500 homicides and only eighty-seven executions. So I thought that indicated a growing reluctance to execute criminals. The facts were that most convicted murderers had never before been convicted of any serious crime.

Chall: Mail usually gets very heavy on the death penalty. Do you recall your mail then?

Sankary: No, I don't recall having much mail on that.

#### Consideration of Issues and Bills

Sankary: I would be approached by groups and people to put in certain bills and that's how most of my bills got in...at someone else's suggestion.

Chall: Having gotten them in, did you work hard for them? I think some legislators will put in a bill, even if it's a foolish bill from a constituent that can't pass, and he's not going to work hard for it.

Sankary: I never did that.

# Would Back End Of Death Law, Says Sankary

Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary (D-San Diego) said today as a result of a recent Los Angeles hearing by an Assembly subcommittee she would "be inclined to agree with the abolition of capital punishment in California."

She cited her main reasons as "religious and moral."

"The Ten Commandments should be the supreme law of the land," she said.

## Member of Committee

Mrs. Sankary sat as a member of a subcommittee of the Assembly Judiciary Committee, studying capital punishment. She is the only woman in California history to be a member of the Judiciary Committee, members said. The committee will make a report of its findings at the 1957 Legislature.

Bills outlawing or limiting capital punishment were introduced in the last Legislature but were not enacted.

Mrs. Sankary said she was also impressed by evidence that the death penalty appears to be no effective deterrent to murders.

## Witnesses Urge Change

Another compelling reason presented at the hearing for abolition of the death penalty was that many persons executed were mentally ill although legally sane, she said. A change in the law defining the defense of insanity was urged by witnesses before the committee.

Another suggestion before the committee would make the extreme penalty possible only when specifically recommended by a jury. Views at the hearing were expressed by law school deans, ministers, judges and attorneys.

Other homicide facts heard by the committee at the hearing, included, Mrs. Sankary reported:

In 30 other countries the death penalty has been abolished.

## Five Offenses Included

In California, there are five offenses which carry the death penalty, in addition to treason. They are first-degree murder, kidnaping, train wrecking, perjury resulting in the execution of an innocent person and assault by a life term prisoner.

Methods of execution in the United States are:

Electrocution, hanging, lethal gas (California) and shooting.

From 1945 to 1955 in California there were 3,500 homicides and only 87 executions, indicating a growing reluctance to execute criminals.

Most convicted murderers have never before been convicted of a serious crime.







Governor Goodwin Knight  
signing Wanda Sankary bill.  
1955



ANTONIO, WIFE, JAN. 1955. The three women in the California Assembly who are looking at the bill of the 1955 Legislature here today. All Congress, the Wanda Sankary, Bakersfield, Wanda Sankary, San Jose, and the Davis of Fortella. (ANTONIO) (PHOTO) (ANTONIO)



Note: (S) refers to Senator, (A) to Assemblyman

FIRST ROW (seated l to r): Assemblymen Newton, Nelson, Clappa, Stewart, Mrs. Sankary, Mrs. Davis, Miss Donahoe, McCallister (Floor Leader), Speaker, Assembly, Speaker, United States Representative, Secretary of the Senate, Bank San, Mrs. Farkner, McRide, Brad, Brown, Culler, Lyman, Desmond SECOND

ROW (standing l to r): Miller (S), Helms (A), Brady (A), Dickey (A), Lynn (A), Pitzer (A), Smith (A), Culler (A), Murrell (A), Corcoran (A), Henderson (A), McCall (A), Lantry (A), Lindner (A), Nibler (A), Bradley (A), Bass (A), McCall (A), Bee (A), Flury (A), McMillan (A), Richards (S), O'Connell (A), Dille (A), Levising (A), Dillworth (S), Dahl (A), Cunningham (A), Rinfred

Kelly (A), McGee (A), Stanley (A), Assembly Clerk Robinson, E. Gaddes (A), Davis (A), Blevins (A), Hays (A), Lantry (A), Lindner (A), Nibler (A), Bradley (A), Bass (A), McCall (A), Bee (A), Flury (A), McMillan (A), Richards (S), O'Connell (A), Dille (A), Levising (A), Dillworth (S), Dahl (A), Cunningham (A), Rinfred

(A), Schrade (A), Regjord (A), Kraft (S), Haskins (A), Belton (A), Johnson (A), Brown (A), Kerr (S), Myers (A), Grunsky (S), Miller (A), Weinberger (A), Caldecott (A), Mangum (S), Casey (S), J. McCarthy (S), M. Johnson (S), Allen (A), Cunningham (S), Bush (S), R. McCarthy (S), Thompson (S), Thomas (A)

## LEGISLATURE — 1955 SESSION

## MEMBERS OF THE CALIFORNIA



Chall: You only took bills that you felt were--

Sankary: That I approved of and I worked for them. Yes, I did.

Chall: Do you have any idea what happened to some of them? For example, your first bill AB933 shortened the waiting period on needy blind appeals. It got through the committee hurdle, and was given a pass by the Assembly Social Welfare Committee. The bill then had to pass the full assembly and senate before becoming law. What would you have done about that kind of bill; do you recall?

Sankary: I went before the senate committee and tried to convince them, and I don't recall if I succeeded or not, or whether the governor signed it or not.

Chall: At least you tried.

Sankary: Yes. I'd go all the way. Let me see, under 'B' you have--these would be things that I would vote for? [Looks at outline of topics prepared for the interview.]

Chall: Those are the bills--from what little information I have about you--the ones that you sponsored.\*

Sankary: Yes with regard to putting traffic control on private roads--if the sheriff's association or someone like that would contact me I would try to help. New judgeships: judges prevailed on me to do that.\*

Chall: Yes, that was successful.

Sankary: The seawater conversion I mentioned before.\* Food surpluses to the needy. At that time there was a lot of food in our storage that the federal government had to pay for--just a lot of storage of food and grain and it was a big expense. I felt that was a good idea.\* [Reading down the list] Then I was trying to protect the old people on old age assistance from having all their relatives prosecuted; trying to end the restrictions against allowing the permanently crippled to obtain liquor licenses.

Then when it came to sales taxes, this is important. I felt that there shouldn't be a sales tax on restaurant meals or food. These very important bills that I authored and on which a couple of

---

\*For additional depth on many of these issues, see chapter IV.

## NEWS RELEASE - ASSEMBLYWOMAN WANDA SANKARY

March 17, 1955

Freshman Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary (D-San Diego) got her first bill, a measure shortening the waiting period on needy blind appeals, through the committee hurdle yesterday.

Her bill, A.B. 933, was given a unanimous "do pass" by the Assembly Social Welfare Committee, of which she is vice chairman.

The bill shortens the waiting period from a year to 90 days in cases where a person has been denied needy blind aid and wishes to appeal the decision. It also makes the same change in the law applying to partially self-supporting blind cases.

The bill must now pass the full Assembly and Senate before becoming law.

#

## LEGISLATOR LISTS ACHIEVEMENTS

TRIBUNE, 1955

# Mrs. Wanda Sankary Pledges Women's Welfare Fight

By ARTHUR RIBBEL

Her fight for women's rights was the high mark of her freshman year as a legislator, Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary (D-San Diego) said today in an interview here.

Another was the signing by Gov. Knight last Friday of her welfare bill giving San Diego two more Superior Court judges, she said. Mrs. Sankary returned from a vacation she started after the recent adjournment of the Legislature.

She said there are seven mil-

lion women in California, but only three women are members of the Legislature. The others are Assemblywomen Pauline Davis (D-Portola) and Dorothy M. Donahoe (D-Bakersfield).

"I'm going to make women's welfare my project," said Mrs. Sankary. She said she "adopted" a bill introduced by Assemblyman Charles Chapel (R-Inglewood) which would provide equal pay for women with abilities matching those of men.

The bill, "opposed by everybody," finally was killed in another committee after she pushed it through the Assembly Industrial Relations Committee, she said.

Mrs. Sankary argued that many women are family breadwinners and do work for which men get much higher pay.

She said she helped kill another bill which would separate women from men in civil service lists certified to department heads for appointments.

She said she also helped defeat a bill which would ban medical centers, providing low cost service by cooperative groups of doctors.

She said she voted for a bill outlawing crime and lewd comic books. The bill will exempt newspaper comics, she said. The bill passed both houses and is awaiting signature by Gov. Knight, she reported.

Mrs. Sankary said she tried to get the sales tax removed from food bought in restaurants, but lost by one vote in the Revenue and Taxation Committee.

To streamline legislative functions, a committee to screen bills, should be created, Mrs. Sankary suggested. Such a group could eliminate a lot of duplications and conflicting bills and save time of legislators, she said.

The water question should have been settled at the last session, Mrs. Sankary asserted. The Senate killed a "good water bill," which would have

created a State Water Department, she stated.

Mrs. Sankary said she voted against a bill to buy a site for the San Luis Reservoir and the Oroville Dam, key units in the Feather River project to bring water to Southern California, because she felt it would obstruct federal government development.

"Every vote I made was with a clear conscience and not for political reasons," she said. Mrs. Sankary stated she would run again "if the people want me."

Sankary: other people joined me were Assembly Bills 291 and 931 which would remove the sales taxes from foods and food products. The effort failed, as I recall.

There was even a consideration of raising the sales tax on gasoline and cigarettes. Now, I would (knowing what cigarettes do to people) I would have increased it a thousandfold. But the reason I was opposed to the sales tax at all is because it would hit the smaller income people, the great majority of the masses of the people, and I would be in favor of taxing the rich instead. So that was the background--

Chall: Now, you were criticized for that because, according to the newspaper, Governor Knight was needing all the taxes he could get to balance the budget and here you were trying to delete some type of tax.

Sankary: I recall that but I felt there were a lot of tax loopholes. For instance, I felt that inheritance should be taxed very high. I don't think people should pass on fortunes from one individual to another. I felt then and I still do that a small amount could be inherited but not great vast fortunes--I would be in favor of taxing that. People accumulate big fortunes out of greed. The things that people will do for money; if they know that at the end of their lives it's all going to be the state's, you would cut out some of these great big estates. So there were other sources of income to tax.

Chall: Who would have come to you with that?

Sankary: On sales taxes?

Chall: Yes.

Sankary: I know that the old people's lobby was quite prominent at that time and there was a young woman attorney--I don't remember her name, Bobby somebody--who was a lobbyist and I felt she was my friend. I know I was quite influenced by her and George McLain.

Chall: He was an influential person in Sacramento at that time.

Sankary: Not him. I mean I didn't like him as a person but I knew that in San Diego we had an awful lot of retired, older population. So it was legislation concerning them that was important to me. Therefore I only listened to what McLain said was good, important. I liked the young woman working for him. I forget her name.

Teachers' wages--I was very sympathetic with teachers. I always felt that in San Diego the administrators were top heavy--spending a lot of money and that it didn't trickle down to the teachers and students--at that time at least.

Sankary: Let's see, the tidelands oil bill didn't affect me terribly much. It would now. I would get very interested in all aspects now! Should I go on with this?

Chall: Yes.

Sankary: The state water department bill. Now, let me see, I have some notes here. What the legislature accomplished: My notes say three major problems confronted them: water, oil funds, and flood damage. [reading from old notes] "The new Department of Water Resources was created. This water department will assume duties previously handled by the state engineer, the Department of Public Works, Department of Finance, Water Project Authority, and include the power to build and operate the Feather River project." I voted for the Feather River project so I must have voted for that. Did you find that I did not?

Chall: I don't know how you voted because I haven't gone into the legislative record. I do know, however, that at the end of the first session in 1955 there was a bill which would have created the State Water Department. "The Senate killed a 'good water bill,'" you said, so you may very well have voted for it. However, you voted against a bill, which was probably a different bill, "to buy a site for the San Luis Reservoir and the Oroville Dam key units in the Feather River project to bring water to Southern California."\* You felt it would obstruct federal government development, you claimed. So you did vote to set up a better organized water department, but you voted against the San Luis Reservoir bill.

[Mrs. Sankary now reads excerpts from the material she wrote concerning her responses to the major issues facing the legislature during 1955-1956. This may be read in its entirety in the following pages.]

Sankary: Here in these other notes is where I voted to liberalize regulations so that California veterans could obtain loans for farm and home purchase---and treatment clinics for alcoholics.

Chall: It appears that in two cases, water and transportation, it was as much a north-south battle as certainly it would have been a political party controversy. This was where the north and south divided and you were inclined to listen to your local lobbyists and other people even though in one case you voted against them.

---

\*San Diego Tribune, June 27, 1955





Material prepared for 1956 campaign.

It outlines the major issues of the 1955-1956 legislative session and Mrs. Sankary's record during her first term in the assembly.

WANDA SANKARY, Member of State Assembly 79th District, aroused international interest by being the only woman in American politics to campaign during a pregnancy and giving birth to her son on last election day (November, 1954) at the same time that election returns were coming in.

Mrs. Sankary is 36 years of age, is an attorney-at-law and practiced law with her husband until her election. Her husband is in the unique position of being the only person out of a population of 13 million Californians to have a wife in the State Legislature. She is the mother of 2 children, the younger boy being adopted 6 months after the birth of her son and she is raising them as twins.

Fortunately Mrs. Sankary's physical and mental stamina enabled her to bear up under the rigorous schedule maintained. During her first session in Sacramento there were 13 deaths - all of whom were men - and many others who became ill due to the terrific mental and physical pressures.

Her attendance was full time and this is a matter of public record. During the 2 year term of office she has had a total of 6 absences - 4 of those being on 2 hour week-end Saturday morning sessions on matters of purely technical and non-controversial nature in which most of the legislators were gone. (It must be remembered that Mrs. Sankary had a new born baby and therefore came home every week-end at her own expense to be with her baby). You may recall a remark made by one of her opponents accusing her of absenteeism which is a deliberate misrepresentation. (You who are with me in this campaign will agree that we want to win honestly and by honorable methods, or not win at all. I will never resort to false statements in order to win any battle.

Mrs. Sankary has received the endorsement and backing of all organized labor on the basis of her excellent voting record during her first term. She has received a signal honor in having a national magazine, the April issue of the Ladies Home Journal, choose her among 300 women in legislators all over the United States for a picture and story on outstanding women in government.

She is an aggressive member of 6 powerful committees and is Vice-

Chairman of the Social Welfare Committee. They are Finance and Insurance; Industrial Relations; Transportation and Commerce; the Joint Senate Assembly Committee on Highways; Social Welfare and Judiciary. She is the only member of the San Diego delegation on the all-powerful Judiciary Committee on which only attorneys may sit. Judiciary deals with a vast variety of legislation touching on your everyday lives, such as juvenile delinquency, narcotics, banking and loan company regulations, etc. In the session just completed in Sacramento, she was placed on 2 additional committees of vital importance - one - Juvenile Delinquency (a subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee) and two - Youth Employment (which deals with setting up a program of jobs and recreation for young people).

Mrs. Sankary is responsible for obtaining 2 additional Superior Courts and 2 additional Municipal Courts in San Diego. She started the ball rolling by authoring a Resolution by all of the California legislators urging Congress to place Sea Water Conversion Plants and Experiments in San Diego. She co-authored the Resolution memorializing Congress to uphold the decision of the Supreme Court concerning desegregation. She also authored a resolution for the Federal Government to enable persons receiving Old Age Benefits to earn up to \$50.00 a month without deduction of their benefits. She authored a Food Stamp Bill which

Her voting record is one to be proud of and she is proud of it. The first session is one of education, becoming acquainted with legislative and administrative leaders, and learning "legislative know how". This experience is invaluable and will enable her to serve even more effectively during the next 2 years.

However, the first session with a consideration of over 6,000 bills in 90 days, is a very confusing and hectic one even for the old timers.

Being on so many committees which met late into each night added to the difficulty. Receiving great volumes of mail - more than any others it is believed - required hours of time to read, investigate and answer. Judiciary handles the greatest number of bills of all - about 1/5 or 1/4 of all of the 6,000 were argued first before the Judiciary committee. Thus, for a freshman legislator to have an admirable voting record in her first year, is even more commendable. Mrs. Sankary is not ashamed of a single vote. She never yielded to pressure from selfish pressure groups. Her legal training stood her in good stead. She could read and understand the technical legal language that laws are written in. She voted - in a word - for human welfare - for the people - not for her own political advantage - and she stands on her voting record.

As a result, the pressure to unseat her is exerted by the press for example, because they would prefer to have some one who accedes to their demands (and then in exchange get better newspaper treatment), they would prefer to have, in other words, a politician in government who is willing to be as dishonest as the newspaper men are rather than an aggressive servant of the people who is less concerned with her own political future than with the welfare of the people and the promotion of good government. Yes - the power of the press and of other powerful interests is tremendous. If she doesn't get elected because their power is too great, then she will lose with a clear conscience that she stood as staunchly as she could for the people's welfare.

Take for example the speakership fight

See Newspaper Clipping

What the Legislature accomplished:

Three major problems confronted the legislature - water, oil funds and flood damage. There were two phases of water problems: a new Department of Water Resources was created. This Water Department will assume duties previously handled by State Engineer, Department of Public Works, Department of Finance, Water Project Authority includes power to build and operate Feather River Project under the State Water Plan.

Secondly - the budget included an item of \$9,000,000.00 (Nine Million Dollars) for appropriations of dam sites, make plans for re-location of highways and railroads, in short - to launch the Feather River Project. But it fell short of actual construction. Such a bill to amend the budget was defeated. I voted in favor of it. Reason for its failure, many Southerners feel that no money should be appropriated for the State Water plan until the "County of origin" problem is settled preferably by Constitutional Amendment. The Counties of origin of the water up north presently have under the law the right to all the water they want. If some time in the future they need more water they could take it from us in the south. Although we have greater need of it, and even though we have paid millions of dollars for dams and aqueducts to carry it down here. So the legislature, unfortunately, put off again the settling of these water rights and as a result no construction of the water project was authorized.

#### SEE NEWSPAPER CLIPPING

The next major issue was disposition of the oil royalty funds accruing to the State. First the legislature passed a law allocating the first seven million dollars to beaches and parks, three million dollars to the general fund, and any remainder to a "special investment fund", which can be spent only by vote of legislature.

Secondly, one hundred and twenty million dollars of the Long Beach royalties came into the State treasury by way of a compromise agreement between the legislature and the city of Long Beach officials, plus about fifteen million dollars a year henceforth. This was a fierce controversy which by this compromise was finally settled. *by Mrs. Sankary's*

*Indecision*  
As to the flood damage issues, we in the south agreed that we should find means of providing assistance to the flood stricken areas of the State. The question was HOW? Bear in mind that most of the people in California live in Southern California, in fact south of the Tehachapi's. Therefore, they, through their taxes, pay for most of what the State does. The flood and fire damage occurred in the North and expenditures of our tax funds up there would of course accrue to their benefit and

much less to ours. We have been waiting for highways here. For example, for development of Highway 80 to Imperial Valley for about 16 years. Always, the excuse is lack of funds. Yet 38 million dollars was needed to repair flood damaged highways in the north resulting from last December and January floods.

3 sources were possible: 1 - take the highway tax funds available and thus delay already scheduled construction; 2 - raise the gasoline tax enough to cover the cost; 3 - use surpluses. I favored the latter and opposed the former two. There is a rainy day fund of 75 million dollars and a bond retirement fund of 15 million dollars standing intact.

What resulted instead was a measure which appropriated 25 million dollars mostly from the State general fund - and so the Budget was the largest in history - one billion, eight million dollars and this - without raising taxes. I will never favor raising taxes as long as our great surpluses remain, and as long as appropriations of that size can be made and still balance the budget.

The legislature also - besides alleviating flood destruction, took constructive steps to provide greater flood protection and control;

It also created a State planning agency to assist Cities and Counties on a State wide scale to exercise real property planning functions;

It also liberalized the conditions which which California veterans may obtain loans for farm and home purchases.

The California legislature memorialized Congress of the United States to place Sea Water Conversion experiment plants in San Diego - in anywhere in the State. I was the author of this and the results are already being seen. Local papers are carrying the stories of

#### SEE NEWSPAPER CLIPPING

The legislature also provided for the establishment of treatment clinics for alcoholics; also increased salaries

- Sankary: Yes and that was in trying to save the state money since the federal government had started it.
- Chall: You don't recall, however, whether you were really concerned about the federal reclamation laws or simply opposed to the state building the reservoir because of finances? The 160-acre limit, which is the heart of it, is now again in focus and that was what was behind all that lobbying at that time. How much people were aware of it I don't know.
- Sankary: Yes, we were aware of it. I remember that argument and I know I felt there should be that limitation--the 160 acres.
- Chall: So in the first instance you did vote what would have been your conscience and, the second time around, you did not--you voted with the southern faction. The weighing of the issue, as a north-south consideration is very important.
- Sankary: Yes, because you try to do what's best for the whole state. Then I recall often being told that you should vote your district. That was another kind of conflict: what's best for the state or should I go with this one little corner of the state--what we want selfishly.
- Chall: You balanced it--is that it, as you could?
- Sankary: Yes.
- Chall: Well, that's always a part of the legislative problems. Is that one of the things that you objected to about being a legislator?
- Sankary: Yes, I think on the whole a person should vote what's best for the whole state.
- [end tape 4, side A; begin tape 4, side B]
- Chall: Is there anything else that you can recall that you would want to take up?
- Sankary: I don't think I did anything else. [Chuckles] I was just busy trying to keep my head above water. It seems confusing; I didn't really have any real great driving issue. Since it is over twenty years ago and such voluminous material to be suddenly mired in--my memory is unfortunately very scanty. I should have kept a diary.
- Chall: What you did was just to work hard on whatever seemed important to you?
- Sankary: Yes. Just study what people brought to me, what seemed good to me, that someone else needed. But I didn't have any cause of my own. I wasn't thinking of what would improve my chances to elevate

Sankary: myself, it would seem. You might say I had no vision, right? It seemed that first session was such a surprise, I hadn't really thought about it. Like when the baby came, I remember feeling surprise. Who is this and what do I do with him? [Laughter] I got into the campaign and made sure I won and there I was. I wasn't ready to do something with it. They both occurred at once. I had concentrated on my law practice, and on my campaign and didn't think ahead. One track mind. I still do that. When I have something to accomplish it takes all my thoughts, attention, total occupation. Maybe it's because I am of a pure blood strain, not a mixture of nationalities. I'm a first generation American with things to accomplish, a singleness of purpose. I'm as intense, and tense as any other thoroughbred animal. But my life is ruled more by emotions; my heart prevails over my head, and that, in my case, has prevented my going to the top, professionally. I had the ability, but I am a romantic first. My family meant more to me than anything.

### Evaluating Politics

#### Women in Politics

Chall: How do you look back then on that experience? Let me ask you this, do you think that women make a difference as legislators and did you? Do they and did you?

Sankary: I think I had more effect as a beginning legislator than I had ever dreamed I would and--more than others do, or did. I think just being able to kill that one bad bill--the medical society one--was an accomplishment that justified my being there. It was such an important piece of legislation to the general public. They can never stop that now--pre-paid group medical care.

Chall: Did you find yourself differing in opinions on legislation because you were a woman? Because you had a different approach to life than the men did?

Sankary: No--unless I was more sympathetic to the poor, the blind, and the aged. I don't know if women are more sensitive that way or not. Generally women would be softer I think.

Chall: That, of course, is one of the reasons why men are supposed never to have wanted them in government--but that doesn't necessarily mean that's a bad thing. It's perhaps true. But in looking at yourself, you're not sure that you looked at things differently?

Sankary: I never felt different either in law school or in the legislature from the men--in thinking. I never felt that I was different in any way. When somebody would say, "Well, it's good to have women here--it's a balance," I always kind of wondered what they meant because I personally never felt women were different.

Chall: Would you encourage women to go into public office? Do you encourage them if you have the opportunity?

Sankary: I am so disappointed in our elections that I am almost at the point of believing that people should not have the vote. I just can't believe the way the populace votes and is sold a bill of goods over and over and over.

There's so much evil in the press. I remember a reporter telling me years ago before I became a candidate that the San Diego newspaper was the worst one he had ever worked for. He had worked for many papers but this one actually changed the news--eliminated facts and was so dishonest. In view of our country allowing all this to happen and the people being constantly sold down the river against their own interests--I just despair for it.

It's often such a bitter experience that I would not advise anyone who was sensitive at all to go into politics. I found many people agreed with me after I told them, "Don't go into politics. You'll have your heart beaten to a pulp." They said that they remembered that and years later they said, "Yes, she's right. It's just a rotten game."

Chall: So you really don't encourage anybody to go into the legislature or into politics.

Sankary: It's a very bitter, difficult experience. There are a lot of wonderful, exciting things happening too and at first you enjoy the adulation--the acclaim--being prominent, and the prestige, and some of the privileges. But eventually--and very soon after I was elected I just longed--just yearned for anonymity. When you lose that, you feel almost as bad as when you lose your health.

Now when I see people cracking up who are movie stars or athletes--someone who isn't prepared for sudden fame, I know exactly what they're going through--that constant badgering by the press and the telephones, and people around. You have no privacy. You can't step out of your bedroom. [Laughter] You're just surrounded always. That pressure just builds up where you just long for anonymity.

Chall: So it was really difficult for you to be in the fish bowl as it were?



Sankary: Yes, as are most people who are sensitive. I think many people crack up--movie stars....

Chall: Yes, the people who are in the public eye all the time. Did you feel that women react to stress differently from men as you watched the men in the legislature, in a critical period, or in your own campaign? Do you feel that women just find it harder to work under stress than men? Is that a sexual thing?

### The First Campaign Reviewed: Illness, Pregnancy, and Law Practice

Sankary: No, I don't think so. I think women find it harder in certain circumstances because I had a much harder campaign from many standpoints than any man. I was pregnant and then at the same time I had this operation when I had to go into Cedars of Lebanon. I don't know if I mentioned that.

Chall: No, you didn't.

Sankary: Well, for some reason my wrists swelled. They called it atrophy in the transverse ligaments. For some reason that they never knew when I became pregnant--it triggered something, caused the ligaments to enlarge and tighten across both my wrists. This resulted in my fingers swelling about that big [gestures, indicating extreme swelling] and my hands were real large. It was very, very painful. I couldn't hold a pencil, or feed myself, or hold the phone. I went to thirteen doctors and they all gave different opinions. I sensed that they really didn't know what the diagnosis was. They were going to cut into my shoulder blades, into my back and my arms.

During that time I was pregnant, and campaigning, and practicing law. So I was under a great deal of stress in addition to the pain increasing and increasing. It was terrible. The doctors put me on morphine as a pain killer and it didn't ever get completely rid of the pain. As it increased, I kept doubling and tripling this morphine. One day when I called to get a prescription refilled, the doctor refused to give me any more because the baby was certain to be born an addict and he cut me off of it completely. I remember going into hysteria and screaming.

A friend of ours was the wife of a medical man in L.A.--the same couple who found Ronnie for me to adopt later. I got on the train and went up there and she took me to Cedars of Lebanon. We had exhausted the thirteen doctors in San Diego who were neurologists, and orthopedists, and everything else.

Sankary: So we were going to start again in L.A. She and her M.D. husband put me in the hospital and got a battery of doctors. They diagnosed a very rare malady. One doctor said that somehow he remembered this peculiar ailment back in his medical schooling.

So they went into my wrists and cut the ligament. The swelling went down immediately but they put me in a cast from the tip of my fingers to my elbow. It was a real stiff cast--

Chall: Both arms?

Sankary: Both arms. There are so many nerves going through your hands that they had to be immobilized completely. I couldn't go to the bathroom alone. I couldn't reach up to brush my teeth or anything because the cast was so thick--and that was how I was campaigning. I put two white gloves on all the way to my elbows and I looked ridiculous in those white gloves everywhere I went.

Then I was pregnant way out to here and I was really a comical sight. I was so embarrassed. This was one reason I adopted Ronnie because I went through such shame and embarrassment in the public eye with this condition--double condition. I had had it with pregnancies.

When I went on TV--all the candidates were always having to appear. They deliberately would move the camera back to get the full view of me. Oh, it was really torture. So I conclude that no one could have a harder campaign than I because I really worked all the time, and practiced law, and was in that's men's jail all the time.

Chall: Men's jail?

Sankary: Yes, didn't I tell you about that?

Chall: No.

Sankary: Oh, dear, you must have forgotten! No? Well, I'll repeat it briefly. It happened that there was a black man who had been in jail for several months with a robbery charge--armed robbery--and his trial came up. Our office represented him and my husband was still tied up in some other trial so I had to go to this trial. My husband said, "Oh, just do the best you can. You can't beat this case. They've got him cold." But I somehow won that case and he walked out free for the first time in months. Then every criminal in the men's county jail decided that they wanted Mrs. Sankary as the attorney. They were so impressed by this one win. So every day I had to go down and interview a client in the men's jail.  
[Laughter]

Sankary: Yes, I was pregnant and with this cast, but I spent the whole summer in the men's jail. And in those days they didn't have visiting rooms like our new jails, where you can talk, seated on a chair. They put me right into the pad with all the prisoners there and clanged the doors--those heavy bars--behind me. I can still hear that crash. And there I was alone with all those awful-looking men laying and sleeping on the bare cement--they were very crowded jails. I spent nearly every day with all those new clients.

Chall: Did you win any other cases?

Sankary: I don't remember. Some you win; some you lose. But that was such an incredible situation. I don't know anyone in the United States who had that experience. I remember saying to myself, "If those guys would just grab me as a hostage, they'd all go free" because if you're a pregnant woman, the jailer would let them go to save you. I really feared that. Every time I went in there I looked at those guys, thinking of grabbing me and saying, "Okay jailer, let us out." They surprisingly didn't, but I was just helpless.

Chall: So you think women can be just as strong as men?

Sankary: Oh, I do, I do.

#### The Conflict Between Home and Career

Chall: I take it that you had a conflict between parenthood and your profession. That was one of the problems at the time.

Sankary: Yes, it was.

Chall: Do you think that women do face that conflict and that it's something that's unavoidable?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: Have you noticed in the last few years that some women don't accept this conflict--That they find ways of having their children taken care of and they just assume that they're going to have a profession. It doesn't bother them--they are parents and do take good care of their children.

Sankary: Right. The only way I interpret that is that some women really are not crazy about having children, or about their children because I know of women who are not even working who just don't seem to spend any time or have any interest in their children at all. I went overboard. I went to the other extreme with my children.

Chall: Do you think it's possible to combine a career and parenthood without the conflict?

Sankary: Only to women who are less interested in children--and I don't hold it against them. They just have other interests. I was thirty-five before I had the first and only child and then I adopted the second. So they just meant more to me than they do to other women. It was harder for me.

Chall: Are you in favor of the Equal Rights Amendment?

Sankary: Yes. Of course.

Chall: What about your career after you came out of the legislature?

Sankary: I might add that I never tried not to have children--I just never had the opportunity to have a child. I really wanted the babies. For that reason I probably went overboard and I was willing to give up my career for it.

Chall: To what extent did you give up your career? I think you told me that by the time your children were in kindergarten you did go back to law practice part time.

Sankary: Yes, but I never reviewed the law and I had lost so much background. The laws, of course, changed every year and I didn't keep up with them at all. When I returned to the practice I never felt that I was really a competent attorney in any field except personal injury. Being a perfectionist, I wanted to be perfectly sure before doing some client's case, that it had the most competent handling it could get. I sort of specialized in personal injury and insurance, because I had done so much of that work before I became a lawyer that I knew that field well. In the other areas of law I felt a little insecure. So I did the business management in the office--keeping track of the business accounts, interviewing and taking histories on new clients, and preparing the cases' backgrounds. But my husband continued to carry the full responsibility.

Chall: As your children grew older did you gradually take on more of that? Did you devote more time to it?

Sankary: But I never was more into relearning the law or reviewing it. Our business just increased enough so that I was kept very, very busy without actually going into trial.

Chall: It could be an eight-hour day eventually rather than just three or four as it was then? You took on more? More time?

Sankary: Oh, yes, it was. It took more time. I do think that politics (and to some extent law practice) is such a stress on sensitive people. It often destroys their health--their lives. It can destroy one.

## Politics and Democracy

- Chall: What's the alternative if we're going to have a democratic government?
- Sankary: I think we need a lot of good new regulations like Common Cause proposes. The control of the lobbyists and exposure of what legislators get, or how the legislators increase their own financial situation while in office—all that kind of reform.
- Chall: So that the pressures, the financial pressures are taken off—
- Sankary: Even those who tend to be dishonest legislators would be better controlled. They wouldn't get away with it. There should be a limitation, I think, on the terms of office.
- Chall: Oh, you do feel that?
- Sankary: Yes, so there isn't that kind of power, because I know Senator Kraft had been there so long that he had too great—not always all for the good.
- Chall: Have you ever thought of what the term of office might be, the length of the term?
- Sankary: Maybe three terms for the assembly.
- Chall: The senate has four years.
- Sankary: Yes, they shouldn't have more than two terms because that's eight years. Eight or ten years would be plenty.
- Chall: It takes a long time to get acquainted with just the way the legislature works, so after that you can really be effective for the next number of terms.
- Sankary: It is a mistake to remove someone who has just gotten started before they become effective.

## The Devastating Reelection Campaign, 1956

- Chall: Do you want to talk about that last campaign in which you were removed? I think we've covered everything else pretty well but not that reelection campaign.

Sankary: No, I really don't but I will. When Mr. Crawford decided to run he got some powerful guns behind him including Pat Brown who campaigned for Mr. Crawford against an incumbent Democrat. There was some deal made there which I never found out. But when Mr. Crawford was in the assembly I understand he was very unpopular and wasn't too well accepted. But he and Brown still had some deal going because Mr. Brown appointed him to the judgeship out of the assembly. So he wasn't there long. It was just a stepping stone to the judgeship--this may have been his arrangement.

Chall: But Brown was attorney general at that time.

Sankary: But then he became governor.

Chall: Yes. He appointed him after '58 then?

Sankary: Along with the money that was poured into this one campaign, most of the town being conservative and all of the judges--just about all of them--were Republican appointees by previous administrations. There was a lot of crud--everything was directed at me. The newspapers, the big wheels, the big names.

For instance, somehow Mr. Crawford got the advertisement of one of the important blacks, Archie Moore. I had espoused the black cause very strongly. They were in my district. The entire black community was in the 79th district. So I felt respected by them and Bebe Banks was a black I had put on the central committee and I was very close to the blacks. I don't know whether it was money or what. I understood that a lot of money was handed out down there. Also they got a prominent name like Archie Moore, the boxer who was then the pride of the black community, a very prominent San Diegan black. When he went on television, on paid commercials against me, it was devastating to have a popular black boxer that everyone was looking up to, appear against me.

After I started campaigning when I, and even my husband, was practicing law, the judges became so antagonistic merely on party lines, that I still remember the name of this one judge--Judge William Glen that was ruthless. Another one was Joe Shell. Those two I particularly remember taking very open roles against me, and not only in the campaign but in our cases against innocent clients. They were ruthless, and in my opinion unfit judges, being idealistic as I am.

In this one divorce case, I represented the defendant. Of course it's common knowledge that in every trial both sides get to talk, but in this case the judge ruled for the plaintiff after the plaintiff's case was presented and I never got to present my case at all. The defendant and I never got to talk at all! In addition, he went to the chief of the judges, Judge Bonsell Noon,

# 'Payola' Charged in Brown's Appointment Of Crawford

By OLIVER KING

Gov. Edmund G. Brown's two recent court appointments shocked San Diego Democrats and surprised Republicans.

Democrats are openly criticizing Republican Assemblyman George Crawford's appointment to the Municipal Court and also Magistrate Ronald Abernathy's promotion to the Superior Court.

The term, "payola" has been applied to the governor's action in rewarding Crawford for the assemblyman's cooperation during the past legislative session.

Republicans, on the other hand, were counting on Crawford to continue as assemblyman from the 79th District.

Abernathy, a Democrat, during a recent Bar Assn. plebiscite, polled the greatest number of votes for a Superior Court post, but had not been endorsed by Democrats.

## Back Candidates

Loyal Democrats who had backed the governor in all of his proposals had been pressing for either La Jolla attorney Sherwood Roberts or Byron Lindsley to fill the Superior Court vacancy.

Roberts, an active Democrat, is finance chairman of the county central committee. Lindsley, an attorney, is a former chairman of the central committee.

Democrats are also searching for answers to the reason why Brown appointed Crawford. The governor, on his first trip to San Diego last summer, following the past legislative session,

told newsmen that he had appreciated Crawford's cooperation in Sacramento.

At that time, the question was asked whether the governor would appoint the assemblyman to a municipal court post and Brown indicated that he was considering it.

## No Surprise

Brown's action, in effect, was not surprising to the astute politico, but Democrats were counting on a straight partisan policy toward appointments.

It appears that Republicans also had similar notions.

Jim Hervey, local chairman of the GOP central committee, reported last week that no strong candidates had been contemplated to succeed Crawford.

Democrats, however, are contributing at least two candidates to the primary election—Jim Mills, curator at Serra Museum and Leroy Seckler, an attorney.

By shifting Crawford to the court post, Brown has also cre-

ated a minor problem for election officials.

## Special Election

The State Constitution requires that following an assembly vacancy, the governor must call a special election after 54 days, which would be around primary election time.

If he does not sign a special election proclamation, the election may be automatic. The problem may be solved by running the election concurrent with the primary election.

Thus, any person running in the 79th District will be a special election candidate.

Brown's bi-partisan attitude, which Democrats thought had ended following his election to the governorship, has somehow become prevalent again.

It was widely known that the governor, as attorney general, had supported, and in turn been supported by, Republicans. The governor numbers among his many close acquaintances some of the top GOP leaders in California.

HOME ADDRESS  
1500 STUART STREET  
BERKELEY 3, CALIFORNIA

SACRAMENTO ADDRESS  
STATE CAPITOL  
ZONE 14



COMMITTEES  
Civil Service and  
State Personnel  
Government Organization  
Municipal and County  
Government  
Public Health  
Transportation and  
Commerce

WILLIAM BYRON RUMFORD

MEMBER OF ASSEMBLY, SEVENTEENTH DISTRICT

CHAIRMAN  
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH



April 30, 1956

Hon. Wanda Sankary  
5311 Pirotte Drive  
San Diego 5, California

Dear Wanda,

Herewith, I am enclosing the copy of the letter which I mailed to Mr. Young, of your City, in April of last year.

The contents of this letter explain my position with reference to you and your work in the Legislature.

I believe, as written, it will be more effective for whatever uses you should like to make of it.

With my very best wishes.

Sincerely,



WILLIAM BYRON RUMFORD

wbr:hh  
1 encl.



April 29, 1955

Mr. N. M. Young,  
Editor and Publisher  
San Diego Lighthouse  
2652-54 Imperial Avenue  
San Diego, California

Dear Mr. Young:

From time to time I have had the occasion to read your periodical with a great deal of interest and enthusiasm. I congratulate you on taking a forward stand on those problems in which we as a group are vitally concerned.

In reading your recent issue of the San Diego Lighthouse, Friday, April 22, I note on the editorial page under the title, "The F.E.P.C. Is Out of Committee," you take to task Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary, in which you say in the editorial in correspondence with you that "She has never said a word about the F.E.P.C." I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that Mrs. Sankary not only is a co-author of this bill, as you will note on the enclosed printed copy, but that she has also been most cooperative, and has voted consistently with measures which are designed to better race relations in our State. I believe that you will also find that she voted for Mr. Hawkins' bill on discrimination in automobile insurance. She has certainly been an asset to the State Assembly, and we are proud to have Mrs. Sankary as a member of this legislative body. As a freshman Assemblywoman she has already shown much ability, and we predict a brilliant future for her in State Government.

I thought you might be interested in our feeling toward Mrs. Sankary in view of the editorial which appeared in your paper.

Thank you again for your support of my measures, and I shall

look forward to seeing you at any time you are in Sacramento or I am in your vicinity.

Sincerely,

W. BYRON RUMFORD

WBR:vn

# DO YOU CARE ABOUT F. E. P. C.?

## ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PRAISES WANDA SANKARY



WANDA SANKARY is the **ONLY** member from San Diego County who voted in favor of F.E.P.C.

WANDA SANKARY is co-author of a Resolution to enforce de-segregation decision of Supreme Court.

Wanda Sankary's vote is identical to that of  
of her predecessor Katheryn Niehouse. Call  
Mrs. Niehouse to learn the truth.

Wanda's Republican opponent will **NOT** support F.E.P.C. Here is an affidavit by a Certified Public Accountant to prove it.

Mrs. Niehouse (Republican) does not support Wanda's opponent, George Crawford (Republican), because his dishonest campaign tactics disqualify him for this office.



**SUPPORT WANDA SANKARY AS SHE**

**SUPPORTED YOU!**

**"ONE GOOD TERM DESERVES ANOTHER"**

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF CALIFORNIA }  
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO }

I, WILLIAM F. GAVIN, being duly sworn, depose and say:

That I am a C.P.A. residing at 3047 Sea Street in San Diego, California.

That on Wednesday, September 19, 1956 at the Town and Country Club, George Crawford told me and others at my table that he was opposed to F.E.P.C.

*William F. Gavin*

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 6th day of October, 1956.

*Marilee Cotton*  
Notary Public in and for said  
County and State

# The Municipal Court

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

EUGENE DANNEY, JR., JUDGE

June 20, 1956.

Mrs. Wanda Sankary,  
Attorney-at-Law,  
312 Bank Of America Bldg.,  
San Diego, Calif.

Dear Mrs. Sankary:

I have your letter of the 18th inst. to which I hasten to reply. I was shocked to learn from your letter of the vicious and unwarranted attacks made upon you at a recent political meeting.


I am pleased to state that as far as Department 2 of the Municipal Court of San Diego Judicial District over which I preside, there is not now and never has been any disciplinary action pending against you. I am also able to state that no such action is pending before the local Bar Association.

I have the highest regard for your ability and integrity as a member of the Bar of San Diego, and I personally resent anyone using my name as vouching for his character and veracity when making such unwarranted and unfounded accusations and attacks.

With cordial best wishes, I

am,

Very truly yours,

  
EUGENE DANEEY JR.

Judge of the Municipal Court.

# 12 Judges Deny Endorsement Of Any Election Candidates

Five Superior Court judges and seven Municipal Court judges today made it clear they have not endorsed any candidates in the Nov. 6 election. Their statements denying such endorsements followed a television broadcast moderated Oct. 17 by Harold Keen in which three candidates appeared. They are Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary (D-San Diego), her Republican opponent, George Crawford, attorney, and Robert Driver, candidate for the 80th Assembly District. Mrs. Sankary represents the 79th District.

M. D. (Buck) Rodgers, campaign manager for Crawford, said that during the telecast Mrs. Sankary claimed endorsement of San Diego judges and the California Teachers Association.

Investigation has shown that Mrs. Sankary has not been en-

dorsed by local judges or the teacher association, Rodgers stated.

Morris Sankary, Mrs. Sankary's husband and law partner, today denied that his wife has claimed the endorsement of the judges.

"She did not say the judges had endorsed her," Sankary said.

"She did say the judges had attested to the fact that she had not been summoned before the bar for disciplinary proceedings as falsely charged in a speech by Crawford. Crawford made the accusation in a talk the night of May 30 at Memorial Junior High School.

"Mrs. Sankary obtained statements from judges after Crawford had made that statement in the May 30 talk. She

did not introduce them as campaign endorsements."

Five of the 10 Superior Court judges issued special statements stating they have not endorsed any candidates and do not intend endorsing any, according to Robert E. James, county clerk. The judges are William A. Glen, C. M. Monroe, Gerald Thomas, Joseph Shell, and John Hewicker.

Hewicker explained, "It is improper for any judge, under our Code of Judicial Ethics, to endorse anyone for public office."

Seven of the eight Municipal Court judges also stressed they have made no endorsements. They are Judges James C. Toothaker, Phil Smith, Ronald Abernathy, Richard B. Ault, Harry Bowman, Eugene Daney, and J. J. Brennan.

The Municipal Court judges

## FUNNY BUSINESS



"We've gotta 12-man team—he plays there to keep the ball from going through the window!"

issued the following statement and signed it:

"This is to advise you that it is improper for any judge, under our Code of Judicial Ethics, to endorse anyone for public office, and we have not at any time endorsed any candidates for any public office."

The statement was addressed "To Whom It May Concern."

EVENING TRIBUNE  
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA  
Tues., Oct. 30, 1956 a-3

## Crawford Says Sankary Missed Teen Aid Votes

George Crawford, Republican nominee in the 79th Assembly District, has said in recent coffee hour talks that his opponent failed to vote on three measures to curb juvenile delinquency.

His opponent is the Democratic incumbent, Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary.

Crawford said one measure prohibited forcing dealers to stock "horror" comic books to get legitimate magazines. Another measure provided for the return of runaway children to California. The third required financial responsibility for parents of children damaging property or causing injuries, Crawford said.

## The Independent Tries To Set The Record Straight

We are in receipt of a letter from Mrs. Wanda Sankary which indicates some errors in our editorial of Oct. 11, 1956, and we are happy to print her comments as contained therein:

"Gentlemen:

"I have been informed that you would print this letter unedited in answer to your editorial of Thursday, Oct. 11, 1956.

"Although I have continually asked for the numbers of the bills that you had reference to in your editorial, no numbers have been furnished to me to date, by you nor my opponent.

"The following pages of the official State Assembly Journal contradict your editorial:

"Page 4447, A.B. 2529: I did vote FOR an extension of veterans educational, loan and tax benefits to veterans of the Korean War.

"Page 2616, A.B. 1783: page 5919, S.B. 398 and page 4296, A.B. 3056; I did vote FOR an increase in old age assistance to conform with the increases allowed by the Federal Government.

"Pages 4933 and 4934, A.B. 183: I did vote FOR the bill which would prohibit the sale of horror comic books to children under the age of 18. It was through my efforts in fighting for this bill that it passed both the Assembly and the Senate only to be vetoed by the Governor. The only group opposed to this legislation were the newspapers.

"Page 5857, A.B. 1546: I did vote FOR the bill to appropriate money for state sponsored scholarships for children.

"Page 4191, A.B. 1919 and page 4701, S.B. 1268: I did vote FOR extension of social security benefits to public employees.

"Page 2461, A.B. 37 and page 3864, A.B. 337: I did vote to improve the standards of the apprentice labor law.

"Page 4842, A.B. 833: I did vote FOR increased payments to the blind from \$85 per month to \$97.50 per month, and all other major legislation affecting the blind and needy.

"Page 3433, A.B. 3732: I did vote FOR the San Diego small craft harbor bill.

"Pages 5815 and 5838: I did vote on Senate Constitutional Amendment 2, which incidentally had nothing to do with William G. Bonelli as indicated in your article. My vote along with the other legislators from San Diego is recorded on the above pages. It provides that meals need not be served in bars.

"I voted in favor of all major educational bills. I have received a letter of commendation from the California Teachers Association, dated May 3, 1956, praising me for my support and vote on all major educational legislation.

"I voted in favor of every major bill protecting the rights of women and children.

"Regarding Salk Polio vaccine: A.B. 3800 did not come before the Assembly floor and was not voted on by any legislator. When S.B. 1988 came before the Assembly I was before a Senate committee.

"I did vote FOR water measures affecting San Diego. I co-authored A.B. 3165 which appropriated money to study a route of the Feather River Project to San Diego. In addition it was through my efforts as the author of A.J.R. 40 which provided that Congress establish a sea water conversion plant in San Diego, that San Diego was able to obtain a sea water conversion plant, although every other coast city in California wanted the plant.

"I spent many hours before various committees, both in the Senate and before the administrative agencies, to fight for the passage of bills affecting San Diego, including the sea water conversion plant, better highways, four additional courts, a new state building and many others.

"It was only by virtue of the respect and consideration given me by the Senators and Assemblymen of California, and through my own conscientious efforts, that these bills were able to be passed by the legislature.

"I therefore respectfully demand that you retract the statements made in your editorial.

"Very truly yours,  
Wanda Sankary

Assemblywoman—79th District"

We do not intend by publishing this letter to give the impression that we agree with everything Mrs. Sankary's letter contains. We are doing so in an effort to be fair.

Editorial, Independent

November 1, 1956



Sankary: and he seemed to attempt to disbar me with a story which was totally false. He said that I had misrepresented in an affidavit to him in this particular case, and he went on at great length. Judge Noon was just a decent, honest enough person to come to tell me. I convinced him it wasn't true at all--that it was a total falsehood.

Then there was a lot of stupid little suits, just harrassment suits, like the one about my campaign literature littering some place--just all kinds of annoyances. They actually sent their campaign workers into my garage and plastered campaign literature and vicious things inside my car. They harrassed me every place I went. When I'd get up to make speeches, somehow the microphone would go off. It was really dirty and frustrating!

But I want to say one thing that comes to my mind that isn't really on this campaign. I was doing such a good job in that assembly and I had so many nice letters come in too, that I felt confident and I wasn't worried. In fact, a very great honor came to me I thought. [Laughs] The Republicans asked me--they sent a delegation and asked me--to change my affiliation and become a Republican before they would let Crawford run. They wanted me to become a Republican and then they wouldn't have a new candidate.

There was an annual big dinner here. It's called a Lincoln Day dinner that they celebrate. There was a Senator Jenner, a very prominent U.S. senator as the main speaker and he was a real right winger. I just couldn't agree with anything he said, but I was sitting next to him at the head table! I was the only Democrat and they put me at the head table and fawned over me in introducing me. They thought that I would become a Republican.

I refused to change my affiliation--partly because I couldn't stand him and some of the party policies, and he was such a demagogue. Really, I knew that I couldn't respect myself or live with myself to pretend or pass myself off as something I'm not. Even though I would have voted as I had voted before I don't think I would have had to change my vote, only my registration so that they wouldn't have to oppose me in the election. But when I refused them, Crawford became their candidate. Had I selfishly thought of what's good for Wanda and my future ambition, I would have switched, perhaps.

Chall: Why did Kathryn Niehouse run again do you think?

Sankary: She didn't like Crawford. She knew he was a rotten skunk so she really wanted it. She was very ill and not young. The Republicans that were sick of that candidate I think talked her into it. There was a faction.

Chall: It was her faction that probably wanted you to change your registration?





April 9, 1957

Mr. Leonard Howe  
Dept. of Political Science  
University of California  
Berkeley 4, Calif.

Dear Leonard:

I enclose a folder of returned questionnaires which I sent out at the request of the "Fair Campaign Practices Committee, Inc" of New York. Could you be so kind as to have a Democrat look these over and give us a tabulation which we can send to the Committee.

I think it is significant (1) that only 33 out of 125 Democratic nominees polled bothered to answer the questionnaire (tabulate specifically Assembly, State Senate, and Congress). I would assume that if they were all heated up they would have taken this opportunity to express themselves; (2) that a significant number (please tabulate) had no comments to make; (3) that \_\_\_\_\_ (and here I see no reason to separate by offices) complained of deception in the "Democrats for \_\_\_\_\_" type of advertising; (4) Dick Richards and Wanda Sankary seemed to have been about the only ones falsely smeared. I think those two and possibly others should be treated individually.

There is no great hurry about this job. It looks reasonably interesting and I have come to rely on you for this kind of intellectual job. Here at least you won't have to go search the library. Be sure and return the materials submitted by Preston K. Allen so that we can return it to him.

Many thanks in advance.

Sincerely yours,

Roger Kent

91b  
**Democratic State Central Committee  
of California**

212 SUTTER STREET • SAN FRANCISCO  
Telephone DOuglas 2-7020

170

ROGER KENT  
State Chairman

GOLDIE KENNEDY  
Women's Chairman

Northern Division:  
LIONEL STEINBERG  
Chairman

PAULINE ROWLAND  
Women's Chairman

DAVID FREIDENRICH  
Secretary

MARTIN HUFF  
Treasurer

Southern Division:  
WILLIAM ROSENTHAL  
Chairman

RUDD BROWN  
Women's Chairman

THOMAS CARVEY  
Secretary

TOM C. CARRELL  
Treasurer

Q U E S T I O N N A I R E

Name Wanda Barker

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Democratic Candidate for Assembly 79 Dist  
Office

1. Were any smear tactics used against you in your campaign? If so, specify

Terminous. Since the numerous  
the specify. Mainly that I didn't vote for  
children, veterans, aged, etc. etc.  
that I was dishonest & was being dishonest  
that I was never in attendance at my district  
that there were "640" or other no. of bills I didn't  
2. Were any other unfair tactics used against you? If so specify.  
(Be sure to advise whether or not your opponent had mailings or  
ads showing "Democratic Committee for \_\_\_\_\_")

Yes, mailing of "Democratic Committee for California"  
Refusal to permit the Assembly  
Journal work me to ascertain the truth  
about my voting record. After being  
informed of the facts, continued to repeat  
Return to: Roger Kent, 212 Sutter, San Francisco

Refusing to let me see the mailing list  
of the committee. When asked for the list

away from a microphone.

Primary local big wigs who  
stooped to the worst lies about  
me in speeches & to the press:

O.W. Todd, Jr

Vice adm. Ben Decker (Ret)

Elliot Cushman, Publisher of  
"Independent  
Newspaper"

many <sup>prominent</sup> Democrats I could list  
who worked against me out of  
jealousy of my husband or of me,  
(personal reasons). Having a  
Democratic incumbent voting  
the straight Democratic platform  
does not mean enough to some  
selfish-for-power Demos here, to  
work for our party.

Sankary: It was her people who supported me.

Chall: Crawford attacked your voting record and claimed you were absent an extraordinary amount of time.

Sankary: I don't think he made one true statement about anything he ever said. But it was so hard to refute. The newspapers would give me one tiny little line of denial some place in the back of the paper--when he had gotten practically front page coverage with his charges. So I never got a chance--it looked as if I were admitting all this.

Chall: He claimed that you failed to vote on an act enabling county authorities to undertake a Salk vaccine program in San Diego schools.

Sankary: I would never have voted against that!

Chall: A variety of things like that.

Sankary: Oh, it's just ridiculous.

Chall: This must have been a very hard campaign for you, not only because it was vicious, but also because you didn't really want to go back to the assembly.

Sankary: And I gave up. When I saw how it was going I absolutely refused to go out and work anymore. I threw in the sponge. I didn't feel the people, if they abandoned me, deserved me.

Chall: Did you have basically the same people working for you that you had two years before?

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: They couldn't pull it all together?

Sankary: Except I don't recall Mr. Peterson. I think that everyone was heartsick that I didn't get out and campaign.

Chall: Because that really would have helped.

Sankary: Yes.

Chall: What about your husband? He was taking apparently--not only what was going on inside the garage and all the rest of it--that's pretty hard to take--but the problems that accrued in the courts itself because of the enmity toward you. Didn't he feel occasionally that it might not really be worth it?

Sankary: I suppose he did. We felt also that--not today, \$100,000 isn't a lot of money--but in those days that is what we estimated it cost us in hiring another attorney, and lost business, and a lot of other problems, including our own expenses--that's what the experience cost us.

# Independent



FEAR ... NO FAVOR

YOUR FAMILY HOME NEWSPAPER

ESTABLISHED 1926

ROADWAY, SAN DIEGO 2, CALIF.—BE 4-7321

3 THURSDAY, OCT. 11, 1956

## an editorial

Political candidates are in the habit of saying, "Let's look at the record." Many of them would be aghast—and jobless—if voters took the trouble to check the record as they are so often advised to do.

But it's never a bad idea to look at the record. The things that sometime turn up make interesting reading.

The Independent looked at the record. So today we endorse the candidacy of George W. Crawford, who seeks the 79th Assembly District seat presently held by Wanda Sankary.

The record shows Mrs. Sankary failed to vote on 42 major educational bills placed before the legislature.

Does she think our children are not important enough to warrant her protection in the Assembly?

Thousands of veterans who voted to send Mrs. Sankary to Sacramento are not receiving full value for their votes. The record shows she failed to vote on extension of veterans' educational, loan and tax benefits to veterans of the Korean War.

She did not even vote to grant amputee and blind veterans exemption from auto license fees.

She did not vote on four major welfare measures, not even to increase old age assistance to conform with increases allowed by the federal government.

She did not vote on the state law which prohibits book distributors from forcing vendors to sell horror comic books, a measure strongly backed by Parent-Teacher Associations and other groups interested in the welfare and mental health of children.

She did not vote to allow use of school facilities to administer Salk anti-polio vaccine to children.

She did not vote to appropriate money for state-sponsored scholarships to deserving children.

She did not vote to extend Social Security coverage to public employees.

She did not vote to improve the standards of the apprentice labor law.

She did not vote on an urgency measure to provide funds for the blind.

She did not vote to develop small craft harbors and waterways, a measure of great importance to San Diegans.

She did not vote on six measures dealing with Southern California's water problems, even though San Diego County faces drought and possible water rationing next summer.

She did not vote for Senate Constitutional Amendment 2, which provided for formation of the new Alcoholic Control Board and broke the sinister hold of fugitive William G. Bonelli on California's liquor industry.

Why?

Was Mrs. Sankary too busy with personal matters to look out for the interests of those who elected her to the Assembly?

What other reason can there be, that she failed to vote on 468 bills put before the Assembly?

George Crawford is a young attorney who, in his own words, considers himself honor-bound to represent the 60,000 persons in his district by studying each measure and voting accordingly.

"Where the legislator shows up for roll call to avoid being listed as absent, then fails to vote for a single measure, it shows a deliberate intent to defraud and deceive the voters," Crawford has said.

The Independent agrees. We urge the voters of the 79th District to elect George W. Crawford to the State Assembly, not on the basis of party affiliation but on the basis of his qualifications: Honesty, ability and determination.



Chall: Did he ever discourage you from running?

Sankary: No, he tried to encourage me, tried to build me up and keep me going, but I was really so upset I couldn't.

Chall: When you lost then you were ambivalent?

Sankary: Yes, I was relieved in one way and unhappy in another. And bitter.  
[end tape 4, side B]





**We Elected Her Before . 93a .**

# DO IT AGAIN

**This Year's Primary Election Returns Were:**

ASSEMBLY, 79TH DISTRICT		
	Rep.	Dem.
Sankary (D) .....	4,219	23,141
Crawford (R) .....	11,349	4,034
Nichouse (R) .....	6,410	2,561

VOLUME I, No. 1

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

OCTOBER 25, 1956

## "EDITORIAL"

by Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary

Many of you are probably concerned about the accusations being made against your Assemblywoman.

The concerted effort to confuse you in your vote is due to the fact that the supporters of my opponent want a legislator whom they can control. I took an oath when I was elected, that I would not be controlled by anyone or any group. I have kept faith with the people who elected me. As your representative, I conscientiously voted for what is right for the people and not for powerful moneyed interests. I gave myself, my time and energy to full time attendance at my duties in Sacramento, whatever the personal sacrifice to myself and my family. This was because the only purpose of my being there at all was to strive for good government for ourselves and for children as my contribution to society. Every despicable means, including absolute lies, whispering campaigns, and expenditures of thousands of dollars is used in what appears to be a desperate campaign to remove YOUR representative from the government and replace with a controlled, corrupt one. Do not be deceived!

During the legislative session many thousands of bills are voted upon by each legislator. Occasionally, he must appear before committee hearings and administrative agencies, such as the highway commission, which take him away from the assembly floor. It is impossible to be in two places at once and therefore it is impossible to vote on every single bill that reaches the floor of the Assembly. During the entire legislative session I was absent only five days (two of these were Saturdays), which constitutes less absences than average. Page 6350 of Vol. 30 of the Assembly Journal carried in every public library substantiates my statement. But my opposition would have you believe that I missed most of the session.

Contrary to the false statements that have appeared in the newspapers and that have been made by my opponent, I

Continued on Page 4, Col. 3



## WANDA SANKARY ONLY WOMAN IN POLITICAL HISTORY TO CAMPAIGN DURING PREGNANCY

Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary (Dem.-79th District) is the only woman in American politics who waged a political campaign while pregnant. "It wasn't planned that way, it just happened," she said. The birth of her son and election returns announcing her victory in 1954 occurred simultaneously. Stories and pictures of the

Blessed Event were carried by Life Magazine and other publications throughout the United States, as well as in Canada and Europe. Shown above, Wanda Sankary and newborn son receive congratulatory messages from all parts of the nation. (Life Magazine photo.)

## Wanda Sankary Adopts Philosophy of Abraham Lincoln

I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true.  
I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live  
up to the light I have.

I must stand with anybody that stands right, stand  
with him while he is right, and part with him when  
he goes wrong.

—Abraham Lincoln

Assemblywoman Sankary says, "I adopted this philosophy long ago and I have always followed it to the very best of my ability."

# HIGHLIGHTS IN BIOGRAPHY OF ASSEMBLYWOMAN WANDA SANKARY

93b

Wanda Sankary, 36, was born in Scranton, N. D. Coming to San Diego in 1932, she attended Woodrow Wilson Jr. High School, Hoover High School and San Diego State College. At the age of 22 she married a childhood sweetheart, Allen Young, a pilot in the U. S. Navy. Six months after their marriage he was killed overseas.

While attending S. C. Law School Wanda met her present husband, Morris Sankary. They passed the bar examinations together, after which Wanda engaged in the practice of law in Los Angeles while her husband was attorney for the Atomic Energy Commission. Later, Mr. Sankary was transferred to San Diego as Assistant United States Attorney in charge of the local office.

When Mr. Sankary resigned from the U. S. Attorney's office in 1953, the Sankarys opened joint law offices in the Bank of America Building, San Diego. Shortly after Wanda, in answer to many requests, agreed to run for the State Assembly in the 79th District, she found she was expecting her first child. But this did not deter her and she campaigned despite her pregnancy. On November 3, 1954, when the results of the election were coming in, Timothy Sankary was born. At the same time, Wanda received the news that she had won the election. Shortly thereafter a new-born baby boy, Ronald, was adopted. Now Tim and Ronnie are being raised as twins.

Out of 120 members of the Legislature, only three are women. Although a "freshman," she was appointed to serve on 5 committees. She is vice chairman of the Social Welfare Committee and a member of the Finance and Insurance, Industrial Relations, Transportation and Commerce, Judiciary, and the Joint Senate Assembly Committee On Highways. She is the only San Diegan serving on the all-powerful Judiciary Committee, and the only woman ever to serve on it, due to the fact that its members must be lawyers.

Assemblywoman Sankary authored the two bills which created additional Court Departments and two additional Municipal Court Departments in San Diego. She has been particularly interested and active in fighting to protect the rights of women, and children.

## DEMOCRATS, DON'T BE MISLED!

George Crawford, Republican candidate opposing Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary, Democrat, has been trying to pass himself off as a friend of the Democrats. But, DON'T BE FOOLED! Here's what he REALLY thinks about your Democratic vote. (Reprinted from the San Diego Union, May 15, 1956).

George Crawford, candidate for the GOP nomination in the 79th District, said, Democrats are gaining power while the Republicans "are losing the balance of power" in the State. As a result, the State is "slipping downhill to socialism, the first cousin to communism."



"One of the more pleasant and interesting phases of being in politics," says Assemblywoman Sankary, "is meeting famous persons and comparing experiences." She is shown shaking hands with presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson at a recent Democratic rally in San Diego.



While Morris Sankary, Wanda's lawyer-husband, was serving as U.S. Attorney in 1953, he prosecuted an international ring of bird smugglers.

One of the birds smuggled in was used as evidence in court and was valued at \$2000.

Mr. Sankary is Wanda's most enthusiastic supporter. He encourages and inspires her through every step of her campaign.

## MAYOR COMMENDS WANDA

June 8, 1955

Dear Wanda:

I am very pleased to hear that your resolution regarding placement of a sea water conversion plant in San Diego passed the Assembly and the Senate.

This resolution should add tremendous impetus to the procurement of this plant. I consider this type of action on your part as far-seeing in recognizing the problems of this community; not only as regard solution of the water problem, but as a method of focusing national attention on this area.

Sincerely,  
(Charlie)  
Charles C. Dail

The Hon. Wanda Sankary, Assemblywoman  
State of California, 79th District  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, California



## GOV. KNIGHT SIGNS ONE OF SANKARY'S BILLS

Governor Knight signs one of Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary's bills, making it a law. California, 80 assemblymen make the laws for more than 13 million people. Only three women. Assemblywoman Sankary's attendance record at the State Legislature has consistently been one of the best since she was first elected.

## WOMEN'S BILL (Civil Service)

A bill which would have given women second-class treatment in certain civil service competitions was unanimously defeated by the State Assembly's Judiciary Committee.

"This would mean that even though a woman had rated higher on the examination than any of the men, she would be relegated to the top of a list that would be thrown in the wastebasket nine times out of ten," Mrs. Sankary stated "because of a traditional prejudice against women in the employment field."

Before Mrs. Sankary, a member of the committee, made her presentation the remainder of the large judicial group favored the bill. After her explanation they reversed themselves and defeated it unanimously.

## OLD AGE BILL PASSED

One out of many notable achievements of Assemblywoman Sankary is winning her fight to pass a resolution allowing old age recipients to earn \$50 a month without losing any Old Age benefits. This worthy resolution, authored and sponsored by Wanda Sankary, was adopted by the State Legislature and now pending Federal Government approval to make it into mandatory law.



U. S. C.  
Law  
School  
Graduation

**WANDA SANKARY'S REAL ATTENDANCE RECORD**

Although her Republican opponent has repeatedly tried to smear her, Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary's full time attendance record and sincere devotion to duty are attested to by all local Assemblymen of BOTH parties! namely: Frank Buckel (Rep), Jack Schrade (Rep), and Meridan Hegland (Dem). These Assemblymen served in the same legislative session as Wanda.

Wanda Sankary's Republican opponent has not even received the endorsements of these Republican Assemblymen nor has the endorsement of Senator Fred Kraft (Rep) who also served in the same legislative session!

But, most significantly, Wanda Sankary's Republican opponent has failed (though every trick, deceit and pressure has been used) to get Mrs. Kathryn Niehouse's endorsement and support.

MRS. NIEHOUSE was Wanda's predecessor and attempted in this year's primary campaign to regain her seat. She is a Republican; Wanda is a Democrat. **REFUSES TO ENDORSE REPUBLICAN GEORGE CRAWFORD BECAUSE OF HIS DISHONEST CAMPAIGN TACTICS! ALSO BECAUSE WANDA SANKARY'S VOTE IN THE ASSEMBLY CONTINUES EXACTLY THE SAME TYPE OF REPRESENTATION AND VOTING THAT MRS. NIEHOUSE GAVE TO THE 79TH DISTRICT WHEN SHE WAS IN THE ASSEMBLY!**



The picture above appeared in THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL, issue of April, 1956, in connection with an article featuring Wanda Sankary as one of six outstanding women in the nation's legislatures. More than 300 women

were interviewed by THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL, and San Diego can be proud of the fact that Wanda (Dem.-79th District), devoted mother and housewife, was one of the women chosen. She is shown with Tim, one of her two sons.

Wanda Sankary authored a Resolution, relative to the utilization of food surpluses to supplement the food allowances and intake of recipients of public assistance.

This year's report of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare states that 12 million Americans are in need, and this is roughly broken down as follows:

- 5 million on welfare
- nearly 3 million unemployed
- nearly 3 million disabled veterans on pensions or disability compensation

Also, that a high percentage of men called for induction in World War II were rejected because of malnutrition (this is 14% of 40% rejected). At the same time the Department of Agriculture reported that, as of December 31,

1955, the stocks on hand of surplus food valued at \$6,082,000,000 had accumulated in government warehouses by the Federal government under the Farm Parity Program. The storage expense to the government is tremendous.

It is better that these surpluses should be used to raise the living standards of the most needy segments of the American people rather than have surplus foods accumulate and rot in warehouses or be sent abroad.

**THIS PASSED ASSEMBLY WITHOUT A DISSENTING VOTE!** It was then killed in a Senate committee when farming interests raised the objection that prices would be reduced by putting government-held surpluses on the market.

**DO NOT ALTER HIGHWAY ROUTE**—Not as a matter of her duties, but only to comply with a demand from San Diego officials, Wanda Sankary appeared before the State Highway Commission to urge revision of the route U.S. 101 which would take through the Logan Heights area. There was another case where the Assemblyman's opponent was guilty of false statements claiming that Wanda Sankary refused to appear before the Highway Commission. Although other California papers carried a picture of Assemblywoman Sankary's head efforts in urging this route revision, San Diego papers failed to do so.

**One Good Term Deserves Another**

This Paper Printed by Sankary Campaign Committee



## ABOLISH CRIME COMIC BOOKS

"I do not see how anyone in good conscience could vote against a bill which has the slightest possibility of correcting an outrageous situation," said Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary, in referring to the anti-crime comic books bill which she helped to fight through the Assembly and the Senate Committees. "Any effort which will tend to halt the depravation of young minds and curb the rise of juvenile delinquency is deserving of support," stated the Assemblywoman.

This anti-crime comic books bill received the support of all organizations and persons who abhor the use of violence, horror, or sex in comic books for children—EXCEPT THE NEWSPAPER LOBBY. This lobby, which was the ONLY opposition to the bill, argued that it would be the beginning of press censorship. But newspaper comics were specifically excluded from the bill! So the argument was transparent and fallacious.

The bill passed both houses, sailing through the Senate with only two votes against it, only to be vetoed by the Governor. At the same time, a similar bill was signed by the Governor of the great state of New York.

This is an example of what a devoutly sincere legislator does who holds the interests and the welfare of her people at heart.



**ASSEMBLYWOMAN WANDA SANKARY** and Eleanor Roosevelt exchange friendly greetings and compare notes at a recent meeting in San Diego.

Published by Sankary for Assembly Committee on Crime Control, 312 Bona of America Bldg. San Diego 1, Calif.

Bulk Rate  
U. S. Postage  
**PAID**

San Diego, Calif.  
Permit No. 337

93d



**THE SANKARY FAMILY AT HOME**—Left to right, Attorney Morris Sankary, Tim, Ronnie and Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary. Says Wanda, "My husband holds the unique position among the 13 million Californians of being the only man with a wife in the State Legislature.

He should get a medal or something." Mr. and Mrs. Sankary share law offices in the Bank of America Building, San Diego. They reside with their two sons at 4919 Cresita Drive in the College area.

## EDITORS NOT INTERESTED IN FACTS

An editorial was printed in the INDEPENDENT Oct. 11 purporting to show the voting record of Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary, but it was a collection of absolute lies, half truths and distortions. Just before its printing, Wanda, accompanied by Coronado Journal Publisher G. K. Williams, called on the Independent to show to the editor and publisher the Assembly Journal. The editor did not look at the voting record and did not mention that his newspaper was about to run an editorial almost completely opposed to the true facts. After it appeared on the streets saying, "The Independent looked at the record," the publisher and editor both admitted to attorneys that neither of them had looked at the record but had merely taken her opposition's word for it!

On the same day, Mrs. Sankary and Williams called on the publishers of the Union-Tribune to show them the voting record in the Assembly Journal. They would not look at the record either.

A day before, Mrs. Sankary and Williams called on Mr. Ben Decker, former Vice Admiral and Republican county committeeman, who had said Mrs. Sankary failed to vote on 682 bills. Decker admitted to Mrs. Sankary and Williams that he had NOT VERIFIED his facts, that the information was given to him by someone but he wouldn't say who.

No one seemed to be interested in looking at the facts. They just wanted to attack Mrs. Sankary, with or without veracity.

## EDITORIAL

Continued from Page 1

**VOTED IN FAVOR OF** Korean War Veterans Benefits, Increased benefits to the Aged and the Blind, Apprentice labor law legislation, the San Diego Harbor Bill, Social Security Benefits for public employees, educational grants to deserving children, tenure, and all major educational bills, the bill to prevent the sale of horror comic books to children, water legislation to bring water to San Diego by aqueduct from Northern California (co-authored one major bill on the Feather River project), narcotics legislation and Highways. I consistently voted against any increase in taxes. These votes can be found on the following pages of the Official State Assembly Journal page 4447, 2616, 4296, 2461, 3864, 4842, 3438, 4191, 5701, 5031, 4933, 4934.

Groups that have endorsed me are THE OLD AGE ASSOCIATION, THE AFL-CIO, THE CALIFORNIA GROCERS ASSOCIATION, THE CALIFORNIA REAL ESTATE ASSOCIATION, THE RAILROAD BROTHERHOODS, THE INTERNATIONAL MACHINISTS UNION, and many others.

Don't be confused! Don't be deceived! I am not an unknown quantity. You need not rely on campaign talk. You can have a voting record by which I may be judged, as compared to mere campaign talk of my opponent. If he is dishonest in this campaign to attain a position of trust where honesty is of paramount importance, he has disqualified himself for that position. I feel I am qualified by experience, as well as education and proven honesty.

Founded 1863



93e

# California Teachers Association

493 SUTTER STREET • SAN FRANCISCO 2 • PROSPECT 4-4110

May 3, 1956

The Honorable Wanda Sankary  
Member of Assembly - 79th District  
312 Bank of America Building  
San Diego 1, California

Dear Mrs. Sankary:

In reviewing the records of the 1955 and 1956 sessions of the State Legislature I was pleased to note the generous support which you as a member of the Assembly gave to bills designed to further the cause of education in California. Your efforts have played an important part in providing better facilities for the children and a more attractive profession for the teachers.

For your friendly attitude, your intelligent consideration and your willingness to meet the urgent problems of the public schools, the teaching profession is grateful.

Please accept this as an expression of the appreciation of the California Teachers Association and its 85,000 members for all you have done.

Cordially yours,

*Arthur F. Corey*  
Arthur F. Corey  
State Executive Secretary

AFC:es



93f  
AFFILIATED WITH CALIFORNIA STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR, SAN DIEGO COUNTY FEDERATED  
TRADES & LABOR COUNCIL, FEDERATED FIRE FIGHTERS OF CALIFORNIA, INTERNATIONAL ASS'N  
OF FIRE FIGHTERS, CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF CIVIL SERVICE ASS'NS

# San Diego Fire Fighters Association

**Local Number 145**

ORGANIZED AUGUST 18, 1918



SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

May 16, 1956

Hon. Wanda Sankary  
State Assemblywoman  
4919 Cresita Dr.  
San Diego 15, Calif.

Dear Madam,

As Secretary of the San Diego Fire Fighters Association I would like to take this opportunity to tell you that the members of this organization are very appreciative of your efforts in our behalf. We feel that you are in sympathy with our program for the betterment of the Fire Fighters' position in California.

Although our by-laws prevents us from endorsing any candidate for public office, officially, we can and do endorse you as a friend.

Again I thank you for your kind consideration in the past and wish to extend the best of luck to you.

Sincerely yours,

B. I. Rogers, Sec.

A Message
to
Appreciation
to You

# THANK-U-GRAM

THANK-U-GRAMS  
St. Louis

A
Grateful
Acknowledgment
to You

In recognition of the good you have done

*Wanda Sankary*  
as representative in Sacramento in serving our  
District- and to assure you of my votes  
on June 5th. May I express my gratitude for the  
flower seeds- & tell you that I planted in 1954-  
developed into perfect flowers- & re-seeded. They  
seeds in 1955. I hope the same for 1956  
Much Success to You Sincerely (Mrs) Wanda S. Sankary

Thank-U-Grams are Free... just as all the best things in life are. See the reverse side of this message.

## RE-PLANT THE SEED FOR GOOD GOVERNMENT



Re-elect  
**WANDA SANKARY**  
MEMBER OF  
ASSEMBLY

Assemblywoman Sankary is 36,  
mother of 2 boys (one born on last  
election day). She is an attorney at  
law, serving her first term in the  
Assembly, an active, aggressive  
member of six powerful committees  
plus two sub-committees studying  
juvenile delinquency and youth  
employment.

★

Plant these zinnias now and their  
bloom in November will remind  
you to vote for Wanda again.

This packet of seeds was returned  
to Mrs. Sankary with the following message  
printed all over it: These seeds grew up  
to be weeds. You can have your dirty seeds.  
You crook. Don't re-elect.

#### IV ADDITIONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF THE EXPERIENCES IN THE LEGISLATURE: ISSUES AND BILLS

[begin tape 5, side A]

[The following was read into a tape recorder by Mrs. Sankary as she went through material she had saved from her campaigns and her term in the legislature and tried to recall the significant issues, persons, and events. During editing some of the topics discussed were rearranged for continuity.]

##### Insurance

Sankary: There was one little fight I had with the insurance commissioner who was then--let's see, his name was F. Burton McConnell, insurance commissioner for the state of California, and the issue that I was trying to establish without having actually presented the bill, was that insurance companies frequently cancel or refuse to renew a policy after the insured has filed a claim for an illness or an injury that was not pre-existing at the time the policy was issued, or any other claims, even on homeowner's policies. I think, had I been there now, I would have made a much more vigorous fight about that; and also about the fact that the insurance commissioner is always--in California--chosen from the field, from the industry itself, and therefore is not a true protection for the populace, not an unbiased executive. There are only three states in the union, I understand, that do not allow their insurance commissioner to be connected with an insurance company in any way, but is chosen from the people. This is a change we still don't have in our own state, and there are therefore a lot of abuses by insurance companies.

Some of the insurance problems that came along had to do , for example, with the training of new people in the industry so they wouldn't be exploited by an insurance company merely to get all of his contacts and a list of his immediate circle of friends and then turn him out.



## Welfare

Sankary: There was a welfare bill I submitted in the form of a resolution asking that old age pensioners be permitted to earn up to fifty dollars a month without impairing their pension and it had passed the assembly. I got it also through the senate, and it became law. Chapter 30 of the Joint Resolution. Several bills having to do with eliminating the prosecution of relatives of recipients of aid to the aged. I don't know whether it was enacted or not.

Too often you become immersed in matters at hand and don't follow the resolution of the bills you had presented. After they reach the senate we couldn't argue them there in their chamber, anyway, so you had to let it go on its own merit. I suppose if I had a bill of major importance and had been there a longer time I would have established connections in the senate to follow through on my bill and try to make deals there and with the governor for their passage into law.

This is why it is important to vote in good people and keep them there long enough to be effective. As a first term, I felt so impotent and even frustrated, and, later, bitter at my constituents for not backing me up for the second term, after I had worked so diligently.

Another bill that I introduced in the form of a resolution, Assembly Joint Resolution Number 14, which died in the senate, was the food stamp plan to distribute certain surpluses of food commodities to needy persons. Under this provision, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture would be authorized to use surplus food and make it available to eligible needy persons by issuing stamps through the Welfare Department. These resolutions, when it involves federal law, have to be passed by both of our bodies and then by the Congress to enact the legislation accordingly, but this one didn't get through the state senate.

## The Judiciary

Sankary: As I stated previously, I had a lot of trouble in San Diego, and my husband did too, when we got into politics, with the judges in town because they were all apparently of a conservative skin and so they took it out on us and our clients and sometimes in a very unpleasant way. This in spite of recognizing us both as being exceptionally fine lawyers. In the law field we were highly regarded, especially my husband's prowess. This also promotes jealousy. There was no

Sankary: support from judges, of course, in the campaign and they actually worked behind the scenes for Republican candidates. But despite this, during my stay in Sacramento, the greatest pressure I recall from any particular group was from the judges in San Diego--either to increase the number of judges so that they could work less hard, or to increase their salaries, and there was just a continuous flow of letters and pressures and visits, demanding these things. Being a brand new attorney and too awed and impressed by a judge, which I probably wouldn't be today, I always complied.

I can recall all kinds of bills for increasing their salaries and increasing the numbers of judges, and I carried them through, and it was done and accomplished. As I think about it now, it really shouldn't have been. I think their salaries are too high and they don't work hard enough. They have a very short day and a long vacation, many of them. It's because they use this particular kind of pressure on the legislators; yet, ironically, when it came to my campaign for the second term, they were certainly not on my side. In fact, they did some harm wherever they could and showed very little appreciation I would say.

I have a letter dated March 2, 1955, which is a three-page long letter from one of the judges, with a copy to my husband stating that he expects me to carry these bills and vote correctly on all these matters. I was angry about this because it indicated that he thought Morrie would control my actions in the legislature, and that if he didn't the judges might be hostile to him and me as attorneys.

There were bills on additional deputies and help for the judges. I keep running across more bills for judges and courts and their employees and benefits in my files.

This occurred even after the very unusual experience that I had. I was a new attorney and so I held judges in high respect which opinion I no longer have. The particular experience was when I first announced my candidacy. I was a Catholic and I asked the Catholics for help but you can't always expect a man of God to have any attributes of loyalty or generosity it seems. I didn't get help because they were all conservatives, the church officials especially. When I think of the money my parents donated to the Catholic cause! There was a very prominent judge here by the name of Shell. His son was also in the legislature. Of course, Judge Shell would not help with any of my attempts in getting the support of the Catholic organizations, although he was in a position to do so as an important Catholic.

And there was the judge that I especially resented--Eugene Glen--when I was representing one of the parties in a divorce. He heard nothing on the defendant's side and ruled for the plaintiff and in a most penalizing manner and as I related before he didn't stop there.

Sankary: I had never been before this judge before. I had no connection with him or any reason other than my campaign and his desire to harrass me that I could see. Now, I understand that campaigns are campaigns. But some of the things that happened to me I'll never forget and this is one.

Speaking of pressures, we did thousands of requests from every organization in the state and individuals; telegrams and letters by the dozen, such as the various labor unions and locals, and the insurance groups--agents and brokers--the California Teachers Association, the Associated Architects and Engineers. Let's see, some of the others are the retail credit associations, physical therapy associations, tavern and restaurant people, food groups, Grocers Association, et cetera, et cetera. Each with a particular position for or against various bills, or simply urging some change in the laws. I have retained in my files some of the letters of commendation and thank you and appreciation that are unusually effusive in their praise. These seem to me not to be the type of form letter that went to other legislators generally. I felt appreciated and gratified.

#### The Seawater Conversion Plant

Sankary: The Seawater Conversion Plant in San Diego is one that I am particularly proud of which the Republicans never allowed me to get credit for. [Laughs softly] It was Assembly Resolution Number 40 and it was a joint resolution that passed both houses and was filed with the secretary of state and went to the Department of Interior in Washington. It was the saline water conversion program to place the seawater conversion plant in San Diego. This then went to the president, and to the Congress, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Department of Interior, and so forth. Then when the 25,000-gallon-a-day pilot plant was erected in San Diego the one who took special credit and publicity for the whole thing was the Republican representative in Congress, Bob Wilson, who made a big fat announcement about the \$600,000 Congress had been asked to appropriate, without there ever being any mention of me having gotten the ball rolling at a very early time before the other states and cities did.

I particularly remember one article in the San Diego Copely papers, written by the political reporter here, who at the time that I was carrying this seawater conversion bill, wrote a very nasty piece about "some vote" coming up on the floor that I was absent from (because I was in a committee hearing.) He made a big issue that I wasn't there at the time they were voting on something

Sankary: without explaining that the committee meetings were going on simultaneously, and that I had to be somewhere else. He did not even explain what the bill was that I was working on. His words were--and they are indelible in my mind--"the resolution, whatever it was," was occupying Mrs. Sankary's time. Thus he dismissed my activity on behalf of the seawater conversion plant as "whatever it was."

### Other Issues and Bills

Sankary: To go on with the miscellany of other legislation that I either co-authored or supported with time and energy. I was always interested in education and support for the schools and teachers. I was dismayed that there was a split in the teachers organizations. It distressed me that the two were not united on issues affecting such an important segment of the community. I think I placed this first in my mind and heart in importance to the state--the education process. I vowed that I would ask to be on the education committee in my next term in the legislature. It was the first solid, vital interest that was sparked in me. I would have grasped it and devoted most of my attention to it, prospectively.

There were pressures on me about meetings of certain agencies still being held in secret. So I took up the question for discussion, in the Social Welfare Committee. It says in the press clipping, which I have, that I agreed that all state agency hearings should be open to the public, and many of the Republicans were pressuring for exposure of welfare cases to eliminate chiseling which I opposed, because, as I went on to say, it might prevent eligible persons from applying for aid. There were two sides to that issue, i.e. whether records should be open to the public, although in general I was in favor of opening all committee and agency hearings to the press and to the public.

Secondly, there were all kinds of problems that would come up before the State Highway Commission. I was a member of the Joint Interim Committee on Transportation. I understood, no freshman had ever been appointed previously to a joint interim committee. So I traveled around the state with these joint committee members for hearings on county roads and state system of highways. There were a lot of representatives of those departments coming in with problems for us to consider for the Department of Motor Vehicles and the State Highway Patrol and the State Commission of Highways.

Similarly, problems arose on the use of the gas tax funds. When they were designated for improving highways they would sometimes be even used for private industrial streets and we had some hearings on that score.

Sankary: I was also on the Interim Assembly Subcommittee on Industrial Safety and that considered changes in the laws which now OSHA [Occupation, Safety, and Health Administration] in the United States government is doing.

Then, although San Diego State University is in my district, at that time it was a state college and there were less than a million people in San Diego. An expansion of the University of California into the San Diego area with a new scientific orientation for the campus was being sought. This was a big issue to face because the then state college proponents didn't want the university to come here and they seemed very concerned about that. Yet the university campus was, as you know, eventually approved and built and is a tremendous asset to San Diego.

I took the position that I was loyal to San Diego State. Later making the consensus unanimous, I made a few enemies I suppose by so doing in the belief that maybe there wasn't enough population or enough money to keep expanding the University of California system at that time. The population at San Diego State wasn't 35,000 like it is now. I don't recall how big it was but it was a small school. Now I am delighted that there is a great university campus here, in La Jolla.

Another problem that arose had to do with how we all stood on the desegregation issue. I co-authored a resolution memorializing the Congress of the United States to uphold a decision that the Supreme Court had made concerning desegregation that year.

There were also pressures on us to support new state buildings, and construction of the state building in San Diego was approved during my session. In some meetings the pressures involved matters of compulsory arbitration that some contractors would submit and which some of the unions desired to be eliminated. No-strike legislation in contracting projects for the state by private contractors, was an issue. There were also bills that I supported which required the projects be advertised and separate bids by various contractors be obtained.

[end tape 5, side A; begin tape 5, side B]

Sankary: I supported one bill where local architects would be given opportunity to work on public buildings rather than calling in other architects from other cities, or even other states to work on our public buildings in San Diego. This was at the request of our architectural society.

We had an issue come before us that I supported to allow the agricultural interests to graze their cattle on state lands and state parks where no injury would be done to the land. It would help the cattle farmers.

## CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1956 FIRST EXTRAORDINARY SESSION

## Assembly Joint Resolution No. 7

Introduced by Mrs. Sankary, Messrs. Kilpatrick, Chapel, Meyers, Allen, Beaver, Bee, Cunningham, Miss Donahoe, Messrs. Thomas J. Doyle, Elliott, Gaffney, Samuel R. Geddes, Hawkins, Henderson, Johnson, Klocksien, Maloney, Marsh, MacBride, McFall, McMillan, Miller, Munnell, Nielsen, Nisbet, O'Connell, Porter, Rumford, and Schrade

March 21, 1956

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON RULES

*Assembly Joint Resolution No. 7—Relative to permitting recipients of aid to the aged to earn fifty dollars (\$50) per month in addition to such aid.*

1 WHEREAS, In 1950 the Congress of the United States  
2 amended the Social Security Law to provide that the first fifty  
3 dollars (\$50) per month of income earned by a blind person  
4 shall be disregarded in computing aid to such person, thereby  
5 allowing a blind person to earn this amount in addition to his  
6 aid; and

7 WHEREAS, Legislation is presently before the Congress of  
8 the United States which would extend this same benefit to  
9 recipients of aid to the aged; and

10 WHEREAS, It is the belief of the Legislature of the State of  
11 California that there is an abundance of odd jobs and tem-  
12 porary employment in this State that could be capably filled  
13 by aged persons; and

14 WHEREAS, The present public assistance program discour-  
15 ages these aged persons from seeking such employment by re-  
16 quiring that any and all earnings be deducted from their aid;  
17 now, therefore, be it

18 Resolved by the Assembly and Senate of the State of Cali-  
19 fornia, jointly, That the Legislature of the State of California  
20 respectfully memorializes the Congress of the United States to  
21 enact such legislation as is necessary to permit recipients of  
22 aid to the aged to earn fifty dollars (\$50) a month, which

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1955 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2215

Introduced by Mr. Masterson, Mrs. Sankary, Messrs. Elliott,  
and Hawkins

January 19, 1955

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS AND REAPPORTIONMENT

*An act to add Chapter 6 to Division 7 of the Elections Code,  
relating to state contributions for political campaigns.*

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 6 is added to Division 7 of the Elec-  
2 tions Code, to read:

3  
4 CHAPTER 6. STATE CONTRIBUTIONS

5  
6 5400. The Legislature hereby declares that the costs of  
7 conducting political campaigns are legitimate public expenses;  
8 that the cost of campaigning places an undue premium on  
9 private wealth or access to private wealth as a primary cri-  
10 terion for the judging of candidates; that the tremendous cost  
11 of election campaigning gives an undue advantage to a party  
12 or candidate receiving large contributions from a limited eco-  
13 nomic group, thus placing an undue emphasis on money in our  
14 free elections that can ultimately spell disaster to our demo-  
15 cratic processes; that this continuing trend of constantly in-  
16 creasing campaign costs can only be offset by the use of public  
17 funds; that the use of public funds for the purpose set forth  
18 in this chapter is the best, most practical and economical way  
19 for all registered voters to contribute to the political party of  
20 their choice.

21 5401. During the month of July of every even-numbered  
22 year the Secretary of State shall certify to the State Con-  
23 troller the number of persons registered as affiliated with each  
24 political party as of January 1st of that year throughout the  
25 State and in each county within the State.

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1955 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 18

Introduced by Messrs. Hegland, Luckel, Morris, Bonelli, Levering,  
McGee, Mrs. Sankary, and Mr. Schrade

January 4, 1955

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL EFFICIENCY AND ECONOMY

*An act to add Chapter 7, comprising Sections 11575 to 11581, inclusive, to Part 1, Division 3, Title 2 of the Government Code, relating to meetings of state agencies.*

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 7, comprising Sections 11575 to 11581,  
2 inclusive, is added to Part 1, Division 3, Title 2 of the Govern-  
3 ment Code, to read:

4  
5 CHAPTER 7. MEETINGS

6  
7 11575. As used in this chapter, "state agency" means  
8 every board, commission, agency, or authority of the State  
9 authorized to adopt any resolution, rule, regulation, order, or  
10 directive governing its conduct or for the enforcement of the  
11 powers and duties conferred upon it by law.

12 11576. All meetings, regular and special, of any such state  
13 agency are hereby declared to be public meetings, open to the  
14 public at all times, except as otherwise provided in this  
15 chapter.

16 11577. The state agency shall provide, by resolution, by-  
17 laws, or by whatever other rule is required for the conduct of  
18 business by that body, the time for holding regular meetings.  
19 If at any time any regular meeting falls on a holiday, such  
20 regular meeting shall be held on the next business day. If, by  
21 reason of fire, flood, earthquake or other emergency, it shall be  
22 unsafe to meet in the place designated, the meetings may be  
23 held for the duration of the emergency at such place as is  
24 designated by the presiding officer of the state agency.



## CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1955 REGULAR SESSION

## ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1763

Introduced by Mr. Luckel, Mrs. Sankary, and Mr. Morris

January 18, 1955

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

*An act to amend Section 11713 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to probation for narcotics offenders.*

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 11713 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

11713. Any person convicted under this division for transporting, selling, furnishing, administering, or giving away, or offering to transport, sell, furnish, administer, or give away, any narcotic, shall be punished by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than one year, or in the state prison for not more than 15 years.

If such a person has been previously convicted of any offense described in this division or has been previously convicted of any offense under the laws of any other state or of the United States which if committed in this State would have been punishable as an offense described in this division, the previous conviction shall be charged in the indictment or information and if found to be true by the jury, upon a jury trial, or if found to be true by the court, upon a court trial, or is admitted by the defendant, he shall be imprisoned in a state prison for not less than five years nor more than 25 years.

Any person convicted under this division for transporting, selling, furnishing, administering, or giving away, or offering to transport, sell, furnish, administer, or give away, any narcotic shall not be granted probation by the trial court, nor shall the execution of the sentence imposed upon such person be suspended by the court.

## CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1955 REGULAR SESSION

## ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1102

Introduced by Mrs. Sankary and Mr. Masterson

January 14, 1955

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL WELFARE

*An act to amend Section 2224 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to the prosecution of relatives of applicants for or recipients of aid to the aged.*

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 2224 of the Welfare and Institutions
- 2 Code is amended to read:
- 3 2224. The board of supervisors or an agent designated by
- 4 the board shall determine if the applicant or recipient of aid
- 5 has within this State a spouse or adult child responsible to
- 6 contribute to the support of the applicant or recipient of aid
- 7 pursuant to the Relatives' Contribution Scale of Section 2181.
- 8 A form shall be sent to the relative requiring the information
- 9 essential to the determination of the relative's liability to sup-
- 10 port under said scale.
- 11 Upon request the relative shall file such statement within 10
- 12 days if living in the county, or within 30 days if living else-
- 13 where in the State; provided, however, that the granting or
- 14 continued receipt of aid shall not be contingent upon the filing
- 15 of such statement by such spouse or adult child.
- 16 If the person receiving aid has within the State a spouse or
- 17 adult child found by the board of supervisors or its authorized
- 18 representative pecuniarily able to support said person, the
- 19 board of supervisors shall request the district attorney or other
- 20 civil legal officer of the county granting such aid to proceed
- 21 against such kindred in the order of their responsibility to
- 22 support. Upon such demand, the district attorney or other
- 23 civil legal officer of the county granting such aid ~~shall~~ may,
- 24 on behalf of said county, maintain an action, in the superior
- 25 court of the county granting such aid, against said relative, in

## CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1955 REGULAR SESSION

## ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 505

---

---

Introduced by Mrs. Sankary, Messrs. Schrade, Hegland, and Luckel

January 11, 1955

---

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

---

---

*An act to add Section 1230 to the Government Code, relating to the compensation of officers injured in line of duty.*

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1     SECTION 1. Section 1230 is added to the Government Code,  
2     to read:  
3     1230. Any law enforcement officer, or safety officer, or po-  
4     lice officer injured in line of duty shall be entitled to receive  
5     from the State or political subdivision by which he is employed  
6     his salary in full for the period of his disability, not to ex-  
7     ceed one year after his injury, in lieu of any other payment  
8     for such period provided by law. In the event of his death,  
9     his dependents, as determined pursuant to Article 3, Chapter  
10    2, Part 1, Division 4 of the Labor Code, shall receive eighteen  
11    monthly payments, each of which shall be three-quarters ( $\frac{3}{4}$ )  
12    of one-twelfth ( $\frac{1}{12}$ ) of his annual compensation. The compen-  
13    sation herein provided for shall be in addition to any other  
14    benefits to which the officer or his dependents may be entitled  
15    by reason of private insurance, contracts or otherwise.

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1955 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 931

Introduced by Mrs. Sankary and Mr. Luckel

January 13, 1955

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON REVENUE AND TAXATION

*An act to amend Sections 6006 and 6359 of, and to repeal Section 6363 of, the Revenue and Taxation Code, relating to the exemption of food products from sales and use taxation.*

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:—*

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 6006 of the Revenue and Taxation Code
- 2 is amended to read:
- 3 6006. "Sale" means and includes:
- 4 (a) Any transfer of title or possession, exchange, barter,
- 5 lease, or rental, conditional or otherwise, in any manner or by
- 6 any means whatsoever, of tangible personal property for a
- 7 consideration. "Transfer of possession," "lease," or "rental"
- 8 includes only transactions found by the board to be in lieu of
- 9 a transfer of title, exchange, or barter.
- 10 (b) The producing, fabricating, processing, printing, or im-
- 11 printing of tangible personal property for a consideration for
- 12 consumers who furnish either directly or indirectly the
- 13 materials used in the producing, fabricating, processing, print-
- 14 ing, or imprinting.
- 15 (c) The furnishing and distributing of tangible personal
- 16 property for a consideration by social clubs and fraternal
- 17 organizations to their members or others.
- 18 (d) The furnishing, preparing, or serving for a consider-
- 19 ation of ~~food, meals, or~~ drinks.
- 20 (e) A transaction whereby the possession of property is
- 21 transferred but the seller retains the title as security for the
- 22 payment of the price.

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1955 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 291

Introduced by Mrs. Sankary, Messrs. Morris, Luckel, and Schrade

January 6, 1955

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON REVENUE AND TAXATION

*An act to amend Section 6359 of, and to add Sections 6369, 6370, 6370.1 and 6370.2 to, the Revenue and Taxation Code, relating to sales and use taxes.*

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 6359 of the Revenue and Taxation
- 2 Code is amended to read:
- 3 6359. There are exempted from the taxes imposed by this
- 4 part the gross receipts from the sale of and the storage, use,
- 5 or other consumption in this State of food products for hu-
- 6 man consumption.
- 7 "Food products" include cereals and cereal products, milk
- 8 and milk products, oleomargarine, meat and meat products,
- 9 fish and fish products, eggs and egg products, vegetables and
- 10 vegetable products, fruit and fruit products, spices and salt,
- 11 sugar and sugar products other than candy and confectionery,
- 12 coffee and coffee substitutes, tea, cocoa and cocoa products
- 13 other than candy and confectionery.
- 14 "Food products" do not include spirituous, malt or vinous
- 15 liquors, soft drinks, sodas, or beverages such as are ordinarily
- 16 dispensed at bars and soda fountains or in connection there-
- 17 with, ~~medicines~~, tonics, and preparations in liquid, powdered,
- 18 granular, tablet, capsule, lozenge, and pill form sold as die-
- 19 tary supplements or adjuncts.
- 20 "Food products" also do not include meals served on or off
- 21 the premises of the retailer or drinks or foods furnished, pre-
- 22 pared, or served for consumption at tables, chairs, or counters
- 23 or from trays, glasses, dishes, or other tableware provided by
- 24 the retailer.

Sankary: It appears that I also lent my name to and supported wholeheartedly all the bills, and there were a great many during this session, on narcotics. Apparently, drug addiction was beginning at that time, not to the extent that it is now, but we had an awful lot of legislation on that subject.

Now, a great number, a mishmash of bills just to clarify language in various codes which someone would present to me and which I carried merely making laws more definitive or clear.

Here also I run across increase of salaries for court reporters; truck weights and other highway problems; construction of intersections, and traffic lights and so forth. Also, I was co-author of bills for compensation of police and fire officers, and sheriffs and their employees, and inspectors and investigators and detectives, when injured in the course of their employment or service. There were bills having to do with liens for medical and hospital and burial and living expenses to be liened against the amount to be paid under workman's compensation.

There were also quite a few bills that had to do with hit and run, or the operation of vehicles, and throwing trash out of cars. Many of these things were mine (presented to me to handle) because of the various committees I was on, i.e. transportation and commerce. Changes, for example, in the insurance code because I was on the Finance and Insurance Committee--these changes having to do with how policies should read or how insurance companies should notify policy holders of premiums due and so forth.

I have run across a couple of my resolutions, one of them commending Maureen Connolly because at that time she was bringing renown to our city. I also had a resolution which was a concurrent resolution honoring and commending my predecessor Kathryn Niehouse--Resolution Number Four. I must say that this lady was nice to me any time I called on her in my campaigns.

#### Legislation Related to Women

Sankary: I want to talk about some women's bills that I spoke on and fought for, even if unsuccessfully. Things would come either before a committee that I was on or the whole assembly floor, and I would--shy though I was--jump up and talk about them. One was a bill that someone had put in which would require the Civil Service Commission to make separate lists of eligible men and women who were applying for a job. I talked and killed it as discriminatory--discriminatory and unfair. When this one came before the Judiciary Committee they

## CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1955 REGULAR SESSION

## ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 3046

---

Introduced by Mrs. Sankary

January 21, 1955

---

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL WELFARE

---

*An act to amend Section 2161 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to the residence of an applicant for or recipient of aid to the aged.*

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 2161 of the Welfare and Institutions
- 2 Code is amended to read:
- 3 2161. For the purposes of this chapter neither the domicile
- 4 nor residence of the husband shall be deemed to be the domicile
- 5 or residence of the wife if they are living separate and apart
- 6 and in such case each may have a separate domicile or resi-
- 7 dence dependent upon proof of the fact and not upon legal
- 8 presumptions. *An applicant for or recipient of aid under this*
- 9 *chapter shall not lose her residence because of marriage.*

## CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1955 REGULAR SESSION

## Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 25

Introduced by Messrs. Chapel, Munnell, Miller, Conrad, Allen, Bee, Bonelli, Brown, Cunningham, Dahl, Mrs. Davis, Miss Donahoe, Messrs. Donald D. Doyle, Thomas J. Doyle, Fleury, Samuel R. Geddes, Grant, Henderson, Hobbie, Kilpatrick, Lindsay, Masterson, McFall, Morris, Patterson, Rees, Rumford, and Mrs. Sankary

January 10, 1955

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON RULES

*Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 25—Relative to revision of the Labor Code provisions relating to the employment of women.*

1 WHEREAS, There exists in the Labor Code, as the result of  
2 piecemeal amendments to very old laws, inequities and incon-  
3 sistencies in the provisions relating to women in the employ-  
4 ment field; and

5 WHEREAS, It is felt that so many changes are necessary in  
6 order to bring the law of this State relating to the regulation  
7 of the working conditions of women into harmony with modern  
8 conditions, that the California Law Revision Commission  
9 should undertake the task of accomplishing it; now, therefore,  
10 be it

11 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the*  
12 *Senate thereof concurring,* That the California Law Revision  
13 Commission is authorized and directed to study and analyze  
14 the provisions of law above referred to and to prepare a draft  
15 of a revision of the pertinent Labor Code sections in order to  
16 bring the laws relating to women in the employment field into  
17 harmony with modern conditions; and be it further

18 *Resolved,* That the California Law Revision Commission  
19 shall submit its report and draft of proposed legislation to the  
20 Legislature not later than the tenth day of the 1957 Regular  
21 Session of the Legislature.



May 16, 1955

Donna Streed, President  
Mission Bay Business & Professional  
Women's Club  
3047 Union Street  
San Diego 1, California

Re: A.B. 498 - "the woman's bill"

Dear Friend:

I value letters of suggestions and advice from my county and will always strive to accomplish what is best for San Diego County. My second and equally great interest here in the legislature is to promote and guard the welfare of women, of whom there are approximately 7 million in California. I believe of the three women in the State Legislature, I am the only one who is making this a primary object. Miss Donahoe and Mrs. Davis are experts and greatly respected in other fields and sufficiently occupied thereby to do little more than back me up in my various battles for women here in our promulgation of laws in Sacramento.

The above captioned bill, A.B. 498, regarding equal pay for equal work, was vociferously opposed in Committee by labor, management, and banking institutions. The effort I exerted stemmed from a belief and desire that women, who are often the sole support of their family, should receive the same pay as a man, if doing the same work. Almost single-handedly I managed to get it out "do pass".

Newspapers in San Diego, in what appears to be a political conspiracy, are giving me practically a blackout; so people there never know what I may be accomplishing here. Yet on this matter, as on many others, I make newspaper copy all over the State, and it is not even mentioned in my own county! Hence this letter, so at least you may know of my efforts up here.

A copy of the bill is enclosed.

Sincerely,

Encl..

WS:bg

cc: To All Women's Clubs in  
San Diego County

WANDA SANKARY

Leg.

Sondary  
Woman

✓

Bill to require Civil Service Commission to supply, on request, separate lists of men & women applicants to fill vacancies in the U.S. municipal civil.

Bill almost approved & opposition by male members of as. Judiciary Committee before Mrs Sondary objected.

"There is one list & if a woman is on the top she should get the job"  
on second vote the measure rejected

unanimously by the 12 legislature. (C)  
Tribune 3/15/55

Sondary  
Woman

✓

re the civil service com. bill:

Ch. Gordon A. Flenny (R. Sacto)  
explained the reversal:

"One woman has changed the minds of 12 men -- but it was the only gallant thing we could do," he said."

Union 3/16/55

Leg.

Sondary  
Woman

✓

Clair Brady introduces a bill to "even things up." Provide that a wife who unjustifiably leaves her husband shall not be entitled to any of his earnings during her absence. Have already provided that a husband leaving his wife is not entitled to any of her earnings.

Sondary spoke fervently against it.  
Assembly vote 54-5 at 3 o'clock  
on minority side. Trib. 3/25/55

Sankary: voted on it, and then reversed themselves and defeated it unanimously, when I said, "This would mean that even though a woman had rated higher on the examination than any of the men, she would be relegated to the top of a list that would be thrown in the wastebasket, nine times out of ten, because of a traditional prejudice against women in the employment field."

I was also the backer of a measure providing equal pay for equal work and my Industrial Relations Committee passed it. I remember that heated discussion when the employers' representatives, and labor, came before us. I said, "Women work a full day in the office, then come home and do the housework and iron clothes while the husband watches television." A spokesman for an employer's group said, "If I were a woman I would recognize that there are certain differences," to which I said, "Thank God for those differences." [Laughs]

I lost in a battle on the main floor on a bill that came up that said a wife who unjustifiably leaves her husband shall not be entitled to any of his earnings during her absence, and that the husband should have the same right. In that fight I said that the bill is unfair because the husband is usually in control of family finances and in the habit of concealing property and money, and during domestic troubles it would let him steal it to his heart's content. I said it's not fair and that I'm speaking as one of the seven million women in California. When I sat down the assembly applauded me, but still voted for the bill. The other two assembly-women voted with me. [Laughs]

Then a newspaper article came out and said that I was not for equal rights for men. [Laughs] I wouldn't give the husbands an even break. The reason for that is obvious because at that time there weren't that many married women working as there are now and so the men were in charge of the finances. So if the husband left his wife or she felt forced to leave him I didn't feel he should have any right to her share of the community property--even though it's his earnings.

There was a bill which was an amendment to section 2161 of the Welfare and Institutions Code which would not allow women who married an out-of-stater to be deprived of their legal California residence affecting their pensions, and so forth. It did pass and provides that the law that used to say the residence of the husband automatically becomes the residence of the wife would not apply to women pensioners and women in other positions of that kind.

### Concern for the "Little People"

Sankary: Generally I was not only going to bat for women but for any of the other minorities. Even though I was sitting among seasoned politicians and got nowhere I would take up the gauntlet.

I have gone through a lot of bills that I had supported and lent my name to and picked out a few that seem a little more significant than the others.

Many in this great stack of bills have to do with extending aid to large segments of the community--social security provisions, unemployment compensation, workmen's comp and so forth; or increasing the amount of aid to the blind or to the aged. The large number of bills in which I was personally and laboriously involved show that so much of what I was accused of in the subsequent campaign wasn't true because I conscientiously supported all good things for this state, in my judgement then and now.

One point I want to make is that I had been placed on five regular and two interim committees--no one in the assembly had more committees than I, and I had been placed on more than any freshman had been, either preceding or after me. During this session there were 6,000 bills put in and with all the additional committees that I was on, I was putting in longer hours than others. I think there was also an extraordinary session called for us after this one ended.

The copies of these bills will also show who the other people were and what they stood for as well as what positions I took. This is interesting because many of these people have gone on to become prominent in the nation and it will give an insight on their social and political views at that period.

### The Women in the Legislature

Sankary: As far as how I as a woman operated differently from other members who were men, I didn't; and from what I observed of the two other women, they were also acting very independently, and thought for themselves, and did an exceptional job--far better than many of the men in the assembly. We were not treated, I don't think, in any way that was uncomplimentary or derogatory. We were accepted and we interacted well with the men and with each other. I can't say that we were any less able physically to stand stress and fatigue either.

## Assemblywoman Believes Her Sex Is Better For Legislature

By Florence Barton Smith

Assemblywoman Wanda Sankary (D) of San Diego County, who will complete her first legislative session tomorrow, is of the opinion the legislature is a better place for women to serve than men. "Women," she reasons, "are more conscientious and less tempted by personal gain than are men. In addition, the family suffers no financial strain when the woman is away. If a business is involved, it would have to close when the man is away. In my case, my husband operates our law office for the three months I am in the capital."

Mrs. Sankary disagrees that family ties are weakened if the mother is away.

"I fly home every weekend to be with my family and have not missed a single weekend since I have been here. I hate traveling so I do it the quickest way—by air."

"I love to garden and cook and spend most of my leisure time with these avocations. It is true my constituents are omnipresent on weekends but I have time for a wonderful family life."

Mrs. Sankary's family includes her husband, her 7 month old son, Timothy, her mother and a housekeeper. A new member will arrive in July when they adopt a baby to be born then. All are hoping for a girl.

The Sankarys want a large family, four or five children but want them closer together than nature and legislative assemblies will allow so they plan to adopt them in between having their own.

Her strongest personal reaction to her first session is the respect and credit she and all assembly members have for Assemblywomen Dorothy M. Donahoe of Kern County and Pauline Davis of Plumas County.

"Both are tremendously competent," she praised, "and are experts in their fields of education and water legislation, respectively. They are outstanding speakers and know every facet of subjects they present. They command complete attention from every man in the assembly."

"It is a long haul to acquire that overall respect, and I am not at all sure I can do it."

The neophyte politician believes that politics is similar to business in that it is necessary to maintain respect, confidence and trust.



Assemblywoman  
Wanda Sankary  
Bee Photo

"One slip," she says, "can ruin a good reputation which took a long time to build. I understand that pressures can cause slips but I will vote my own convictions rather than politics."

Like her feminine colleagues, Mrs. Sankary is planning to establish herself in some field. She admits she argues loud and long against legislation detrimental to women and children and wants to serve on committees studying these issues. She is most interested right now in the problem of confining children in jails.

The attractive assemblywoman and attorney served this year as vice chairman of the social welfare committee and as a member of finance and insurance, industrial relations, judiciary, and transportation and commerce committees.



Sankary: It happened that none of the three women in the assembly at the time that I was there were very aggressive women. We were quiet but firm. I know in my case I was more concerned about my family than my career, and somewhat inhibited because I was new. I didn't do anything to further my career. It was always secondary, if there was a choice. This may not be true of them however.

The dedication to the job of the other two women impressed me highly. One was single--Dorothy Donahoe--and the other one a widow, I think without a family. Mrs. Davis's career was her whole life and she worked impressively and effectively. They didn't however seem to be the kind that would have sacrificed anyone else to their career if they had had family or other obligations. In other words, they were low-key women too.

Certainly when I regard Mrs. Niehouse and her personality, she had never been an aggressive, strident voice either, but a pleasant, kind, sincere person who was only interested in doing her job.

I had known a lot of aggressive, even unscrupulous women in the legal profession. But I personally didn't run across that kind among the elected women when I was in office.

There were some women that were involved in political campaigns that simply turned me off. Rather than sticking to issues, they seemed too aggressive and unpleasant.

I had run-ins with two women during my first campaign when I was a novice, women who wanted to work on my campaign but whose approach was different from mine. I seemed to make enemies of them by refusing their assistance because it just didn't jive with the way I did things. I think it is a serious mistake on the part of a woman who is ambitious and wants to get ahead to become aggressive or extremist. I just recoiled from that instinctively then and now.

It appeared to me in the assembly that the members who were at odds with each other because of issues or personalities, were much more concerned with the issue than with the sex of their opponent. Their only argument with us that I was aware of was on an issue. Whereas in law school I had been told that women shouldn't be in a man's field and should stay at home and so forth, I don't recall ever hearing that kind of a statement from anyone in the legislature or in politics except from my own campaign opponent. I never got the feeling that someone expected me to assume "a female role." I don't recall anyone making passes at me while I was in politics. I don't think I appealed to voters because I was a woman, or because I was pretty, or anything of that nature. I think it was because of what I said and what issues I discussed openly, calmly, and intelligently on television and wherever.

A Brief Summary of the Legislative Experience

Sankary: I had never been involved in politics before I became a candidate and I only agreed to do things both in the campaigns and in office that appeared interesting, worthwhile, and fair, not with a view of what I was going to gain from it or for notoriety. I didn't have any far-distant view, which was my mistake perhaps. But I never used the office to try to further my own interests. And I'm proud that I never consciously hurt anyone to gain anything for myself.

I definitely felt and still feel that there were more failures than accomplishments by the legislature during my term of office. There was much disappointment in legislation that didn't pass or that was vetoed. I had a feeling that I was helpless, as only a very small cog, in accomplishing some of the things that needed to be done. It's a frustrating feeling to see how often men are concerned only with what they get from it rather than what they should give.

In my own instance also, I warm to the memory that I was often told by experienced, respected and high minded legislators that I had handled myself very well. That if I wanted to, I could go "as far" as I wanted to. There is that feeling of satisfaction and pride which will shine inside me for my lifetime. Whatever came and whatever will come I try to yield to that philosophy expressed best in a well worn Arabic phrase, "in sha'a Allah" which translates, "It's in the hands of the gods."

[End interview]



## AFTERWORD

In reflecting on this endeavor, this feeble effort at revealing a personality, I feel a great dissatisfaction. First, because I didn't achieve my potential; I didn't secure more than a brush with immortality, my life desire. I was qualified mentally to achieve it, but perhaps not emotionally.

My life appears to have been deliberately limited, or reduced, to subordinating my abilities and myself to someone else, because of a need to be with loved ones. This sensitivity about going off alone and chasing opportunities may be a combination of my being a sentimental Pole, born a Capricorn, and the trauma of the sudden death of Allen, my beloved bridegroom. In any event, in spite of great opportunities, it was no more than a brief blooming of a brave flower in the forest.

I am dissatisfied secondly, because my life in this short memoir has been so poorly portrayed. For this I apologize. This compilation was made at a time of the greatest trauma, the most difficult period in all my life, past and future, I'm sure. To me, the divorce is most painful, excruciatingly painful. I now understand Medea, and I marvel at Euripides, a man, eons ago, fathoming so well a woman's feelings. A second stressful continuing crisis compounded and surrounded the other: Ronnie, my precious son was using horrendous drugs, alcohol, and all other possible forms of self destruction. Now, my nightmares, instead of being war and Allen's plane, were of gentle Ronnie, softly playing his guitar, alone and lost, his beautiful, sensitive face so sad. At this writing there are signs of change and hope. Ron's story, however, is not ready to be told. He hasn't reached a plateau showing what direction his life will finally take. For my own sanity we have parted. I think we both knew the last few days, that we would soon be parting for a long time. He came in and watched me clean off the old leaves from a plant, followed me around the house as I made work, silent. I miss him.

Yet a third vicissitude imposed itself simultaneously--my retirement. For the first time since I was eleven, I wasn't working. I stayed in the house with no fulfilling tasks or obligations. I couldn't go to the office because we were finished--Morrie and I--and I couldn't find another office that seemed appealing, to compete against my own firm. The sudden inactivity was a drag. Life had lost its meaning.

Thus this oral history was undertaken with a view from the depths of my life. I had had five years of heart-shredding pain. I know that I have always felt more deeply than others (Capricorn Polish woman), but my general disposition is positive and happy. By nature I love gaiety, people, children, music, beautiful scenery, flowers, birds, ballet. I demand that

words be gentle; I have a revulsion for ugly conflicts. (For years I felt physically ill every time I read anything about Richard Nixon. I even composed a book entitled "Why Not Nixon," a saga of evil, long before his last administration.)

Now, however, I feel a new era approaching. Forty more years to live and I don't intend to ruminate. I'm not the kind that stagnates; I want no self centered, hedonistic, meaningless pursuits. I'm alone now. I want to move on to great new things. I can and will follow that star whither it goes.

Wanda Sankary

February, 1979  
San Diego, California

Wanda Sankary -- index

agriculture:

farm labor, 13-14  
homesteading, 1-8

Banks, Bebe, 39  
Bradley, Clark, 70  
Brady, Bernard, 70  
Brown, Edmund G., Jr. (Jerry), 34-35  
Brown, Edmund G., Sr. (Pat), 90  
Brown, Ralph, 56

Caldecott, Thomas W., 70  
California assembly, 53-104  
California Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, 61-62, 68  
California Medical Association, 58-59  
California Water Project, 81-82. See also seawater conversion plant,  
San Diego, Ca.  
Chapel, Charles E., 61-62  
Coker, John, 35  
Conte, Bill and Dorothy, 39-40  
Crawford, George, 43, 68, 73, 90-92

Davis, Pauline, 54, 56, 102-103  
death penalty, 78  
Democratic party (California):  
appointments to State Central Committee, 34-35  
in San Diego County, 41  
Dickey, Randal, 70  
Dolwig, Richard, 70  
Donahoe, Dorothy, 54, 56, 102-103

election campaign financing, 33, 69  
election campaign methods, 39-41, 91-92  
election campaigns, state & national:  
California assembly, 1954, 32-41, 85-87  
California assembly, 1956, 43-45, 67-68, 73, 89-93, 96-97  
Equal Rights Amendment, 88

Farb, Harry, 34-35  
Farris, Sue, 39  
Fleury, Gordon, 70

Geddes, Ernest, 70

negland, Sheridan, ix, 54-55

insurance, legislation on, 94

judiciary, legislation on, 95-97

Knight, Goodwin, 74-75

Kraft, Fred H., 57, 89

Lanterman, Frank, 60, 63

Latimer, Leo, 39

Levering, Harold K., 61

Lincoln, Luther, 53-55

lobbyists, 42, 55-69, 75, 80, 89, 97

Luckel, Frank, 53-54

Masterson, S.C., 70-71

McFall, John, 62-63, 66, 70

McGee, Patrick D., 70

MacMillan, Lester, 71

media:

newspapers, 42, 45, 65, 73-76, 84, 97-98

violence in, 74-76

medical care, prepaid, 57-59

Miller, Allen, 62-63

Morris, Delbert, 74-76

Munnell, William, 53, 62-63

Negroes, 44, 90

Niehouse, Kathryn, 37, 91-92, 100, 103

Peterson, Fred, 39

sales tax, legislation on, 79-80

San Diego Tribune, 42, 45

San Diego Union, 42

Sankary, Wanda

family: parents, brothers and sisters, 1-17, 23; children, 32, 36-42, 44-50, 87-88; marriages, Allen Young, 20, 22-24; Morris Sankary, x-xi, xiii, 22, 28-31, 33-34, 36, 45-47, 50-52, 92-93  
education: through high school, 5, 8-9, 14, 16-19; college and law school, 20-22, 25-29  
business/employment experiences, 15, 18-19, 20-22, 24-25, 27, 30  
as assemblywoman, ix, xiii, 53-104  
as attorney, vii, x-xi, xiii, 29-31, 35, 44-47, 86-88, 90-91  
self evaluation, 14, 27-28, 42-43, 56, 59, 66-67, 83, 87-88, 91, 104-106

Schrade, Jack, 54-55

seawater conversion plant, San Diego, 59-60, 97-98

Shell, Joe, 90, 96

Smith, H. Allen, 53-55, 63, 70

Swing, Phil, 25

Teawell, Bill, 40

Todd, O.W., Jr., 44

tuberculosis, treatment of, 20-22

University of California, San Diego, 99

Unruh, Jesse, 63, 69

veterans' housing scandal, San Diego, 33-34

violence in the media, legislation on, 74-75

Weinberger, Caspar, 70

welfare, legislation on, 95, 98

Wilson, Charles, 63-64

women:

expectations for, 25-27, 87-88  
in agriculture, 3, 6  
in law school, 26, 103  
legislation on, xiii, 61-62, 100-101

women in politics:

as candidates, xii, 32-41  
attitudes towards, 54, 59-60, 102-104  
in government, 53-93, 102-104



Malca Chall

Graduated from Reed College in 1942 with a B.A. degree, and from the State University of Iowa in 1943 with an M.A. degree in Political Science.

Wage Rate Analyst with the Twelfth Regional War Labor Board, 1943-1945, specializing in agriculture and services. Research and writing in the New York public relations firm of Edward L. Bernays, 1946-1947, and research and statistics for the Oakland Area Community Chest and Council of Social Agencies 1948-1951.

Active in community affairs as a director and past president of the League of Women Voters of the Hayward Area specializing in state and local government; on county-wide committees in the field of mental health; on election campaign committees for school tax and bond measures, and candidates for school board and state legislature.

Employed in 1967 by the Regional Oral History Office interviewing in fields of agriculture and water resources, Jewish Community history, and women leaders in civic affairs and politics.



















